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The Western Pacific and New Guinea

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THE WESTERN PACIFIC

AND

NEW GUINEA

THE WESTERN PACIFIC

AND

NEW GUINEA:

NOTES ON THE

NATIVES, CHRISTIAN AND CANNIBAL,

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

THE OLD LABOUR TRADE.

BY

HUGH HASTINGS ROMILLY,

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC,
AND ACTING SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR NEW GUINEA.

WITH A MAP.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages, which were sent home some months ago, were written while the writer was incapacitated by a tedious illness from active occupation.

They have been shown to a few friends at home, who have found so much of interest and of novelty in them, that they consider that the public would also read them with pleasure; and in the hope that the result of their publication will justify this opinion, it has been decided to print them for general circulation.

It is, perhaps, fair to the author to add that, in a letter which has been recently received

from him, he says "it was an occupation in the wet season in New Guinea, but I seriously doubt if it is worth publishing. It amused me to write, but it is very deficient in the matter of giving information."

E. R.

LONDON, *February*, 1886.

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THE WESTERN PACIFIC

AND

NEW GUINEA.

INTRODUCTION.

In the following pages it is not intended to attempt to give any very thorough description of particular groups of islands or of their inhabitants. The duration of my stay in the places I write of never exceeded six months, whereas it would take fully that number of years to acquire even a moderately correct acquaintance with the various habits, languages, and dispositions of all the different races to be found there. It would take many years even to visit and land on every island in what is known as the Western Pacific, and there are some small islands about the north-east coast of New Guinea which remain to this day unvisited. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that there are probably some islands which have never even been sighted. In support of this statement, I may mention that, so late

as the year 1879, Captain Bruce, in H.M.S. *Cormorant*, discovered and roughly placed a small group to the northward of the Louisiades, and that in 1881, during my cruise in the *Beagle*, we sighted a small island to the northward of Astrolabe Bay, New Guinea, which was not in the charts. That part of the Pacific has always been quite out of the track of ships. Island trade has not extended in that direction, which is far removed from any of the great ocean highways. It is true that in exceptionally fine weather a few steamers from Hong Kong to the Australian ports choose the short cut through Dampier Straits, but they have to hug the New Britain coast to avoid the innumerable reefs and shoals and small islands off the opposite coast of New Guinea. Possibly, however, when correct charts of these coasts and of the Louisiades have been made, the route through China Straits and Dampier Straits may be the one generally adopted. It would be a clear saving of two days in time from Australia to China, a consideration of some importance in these days.

Till clearly defined tracks had been laid down, Torres Straits used to be considered equally dangerous for navigation, but now large ocean steamers are constantly passing through without even anchoring at night.

It should be explained that the term "Western Pacific," which represents a slice of some fifteen million square miles of land and ocean, in reality describes a

tract lying as much to the eastward as it does to the westward of the meridian of Greenwich, and is therefore rather a misnomer. It is more convenient, however, to describe it in that manner than to be obliged to talk of the North-Eastern or South-Western Pacific.

For six or seven months of the year, in the season of the south-east trade-winds, there can be no more delightful place than the Western Pacific to cruise in. The average temperature at that season ranges from 80° to 85°, which is not too hot for comfort; and for lovers of beautiful scenery the coral islands are known to stand unrivalled.

Of late years these islands have been much visited by gentlemen of independent means, who have given many of their observations to the world in the shape of books; but occasionally some rather astonishing statements creep into these works. Ignorance of native languages prevents these travellers from collecting information from native sources, and is often the cause of their mistakes. More than one "old hand" has told me that the sight of the note-book in the Globe-trotter's hand prompted him to draw on his imagination to a rather immoral extent, and caused him to supply ready-made facts which would astonish no one so much as the natives themselves.

In one respect, the man who stays only a week in a Western Pacific island has an advantage over the man who stays a year. He writes down everything which strikes him as being remarkable, and attempts to

explain or give a reason for it. The man who stays for a year in a native community becomes so familiarized with native habits and customs that nothing strikes him as being remarkable. If he attempts to describe what he sees, he will omit much that is of real interest, because he does not think it worthy of notice. But the stranger who stays a few days only will state what he actually observes, and his observations will therefore possess a greater value than those of the longer resident. But when the stranger attempts, as he invariably does, to assign reasons for certain customs, such as ascribing to superstition what may be merely matter of etiquette, he always comes to grief. He is perfectly sincere, and believes firmly that a residence of a few days is sufficient to enable him to collect information which the oldest residents do not possess; and he writes his book, quite unconscious of the fact that a six months' stay in any country he had described would cause him to abandon all his former theories, and begin his investigations anew. If he were to prolong his stay he would soon recognize the fact that no intimate communication can be held with a native race without knowing their language.

But even assuming a tolerable knowledge of the language, there are many things which a native either dares not or does not care to talk about. Some of the islanders, especially in the less known groups, credit a stranger with the possession of so much knowledge that they consider questions, put with a view to elicit ordi-

nary pieces of information, absurdly foolish. A good deal of art also lies in the way of putting a question, in order to obtain a truthful answer.

In some parts of New Britain, if a stranger were to ask, "Are there men with tails in the mountains?" he would probably be answered "Yes:" that being the answer which the New Briton would imagine was expected of him, and would be likely to give most satisfaction. The train of thought in his mind would probably be something like this: "He must know that there are no such men, but he cannot have asked so foolish a question without an object, and therefore he wishes me to say 'Yes.'" Of course the first "yes" leads to many others, and in a very short time everything is known about these tailed men, and a full account of them is probably sent home, with full and interesting details as to how they make a hole in the ground with their spears before they can sit down comfortably, and so on.

Questions like this have been asked so frequently in some groups, that the people at last came to believe that the white man knows better than they do, and then they will reach the stage of believing their stories themselves, and at that point investigation becomes well-nigh impossible.

In some parts of New Guinea the natives will swear by all their gods, that there are men with tails in the mountains, and moreover they will get very angry with you if you disbelieve them; but it must be remembered that their knowledge of the interior of their own country

is very small, and that the idea, which, unsuggested, would never have occurred to them, was originally put into their minds by white men, and has since assumed formidable dimensions. Captain Cook himself put this question, and received an affirmative answer, but he does not appear to have believed the story.

While on this subject, I must bear witness to the accuracy of Captain Cook's statements, which whenever he speaks from his own knowledge is extraordinary, especially when one considers that he had every inducement to exaggerate. It has certainly never been equalled by any observer up to our own time. Cook's method of spelling native names, however, and his habit of making one immensely long word out of what should be two or three, is rather confusing, and shows that he never thoroughly learned any native language. He never seems to have quite realized either that he was looked upon as a god, and that the marks of respect paid him by the people whom he visited were greater in some instances than that due to their own kings.

It may hardly be believed, but it is nevertheless true, that a gentleman, well known in the Pacific, conversed twenty years ago with a native of Tahiti, who remembered Cook's visits to that island. The reverence with which he was treated in his lifetime is still paid to his memory, and there are yet to be seen in various places many relics of him, which no consideration would induce their owners to part with.

It is generally said that Captain Cook was the introducer of pigs and horses into the Islands of the Pacific, but in his first voyage he was much more anxious to buy pigs than to leave them behind, and he mentions with some feeling the high price he had to pay for them. It is therefore evident that they existed before his arrival. On his third voyage he took out some presents of pigs, etc., from King George III., to improve the native breeds; but the original introduction of these animals into the islands seems to be as great a mystery as the introduction of the different races of men.

I have in these notes confined myself chiefly to relating a few of my own observations, and I have avoided as much as possible the introduction of any theories on the subject of superstitions or religious beliefs. My object is not so much to give a minute account of any one island or group of islands, as, by touching shortly on some of the most noticeable peculiarities of different tribes, to give, if possible, a general idea of the present condition of the Western Pacific, south of the Equator.

PORT MORESBY, NEW GUINEA,
March, 1885.

CHAPTER I.

THE ISLANDS AND THE ISLANDERS.

It is generally supposed nowadays that, with the exception perhaps of the South Pole, we know a good deal about every inhabited spot on the face of the earth. Exploration in the present century seems to be confined to one or two tracks more or less beaten, though still to a certain extent offering new fields to the adventurous pioneer of civilization. The chief attraction of such places as Thibet, Central South America, and Africa seems to be the almost insurmountable difficulties which lie in the way of their exploration. It is a strange fact that, while so vast a portion of the earth's surface as the West and East Pacific remains almost unknown, no scientific expedition, either public or private, should have been organized for the purpose of exploring these regions, and that we should still be as ignorant of the interiors of Bougainville, San Cristoval, Guadalcanar, New Britain, New Ireland, and many other countries, and of their inhabitants, as their first discoverers were.

It must, however, of necessity be a very slow process, at the present time, to make acquaintance with the native races. It can only be done very slowly, and it is absolutely necessary to have many friends at whatever place may be fixed upon for making a start in. The start once accomplished, the rest is easy. There are little rules of etiquette to be observed, but no one who has mixed much with natives will violate these; there are certain things which must not be done on any account, and which no one but a fool would do. If these rules are observed, then in a very short time the natives lay aside their mistrust, and everything goes on smoothly. Introductions will be given to friendly tribes, to whom messages can be sent asking for permission to visit them. This permission will hardly ever be refused. After such an introduction, should the friendly tribe prove unfriendly and ill-treat their guests, then, savages though they are, the tribe who had given the introduction would show sufficient feelings of chivalry to make it a *casus belli* with the tribe who had behaved so badly.

The ignorance displayed by some of the Australian papers with regard to the islands of the Western Pacific, and the races that inhabit them would, were it not for the harm they do among their readers who adopt merely that side of the case which is laid before them, be quite ludicrous to those conversant with the facts. For instance, an Australian paper in large circulation once suggested the advisability of drawing

a cordon of men round one of the islands of the New Hebrides, and driving the natives into the interior, where they were to be despatched. The available force was sixty men—which fact the writer had an opportunity of knowing, as the name of the ship which was to perform this master-piece of strategy was mentioned. He did not mention, however, that the island was about forty miles long by ten broad; that it had mountains of from three to four thousand feet high in the interior, and that its fighting population was numbered by many thousands. His readers no doubt were ignorant of all this, and, as the newspaper asserted that the fact suggested was possible, they probably placed implicit belief in that assertion.

In the circumstances, what can I and the many others who know the facts think? This is only one case in which writers in newspapers have spoken of the islands as they should be, and not as they are.

I will give another instance of the extreme ignorance which prevails with regard to the natives of some of these islands. Before an audience, including some of the most scientific men in Europe, amongst whom there must have been many medical men, it was gravely stated that the natives of New Britain, among other surgical operations, were in the habit of mending broken legs by introducing a strip of tortoise-shell into the bone. This, it was asserted, was neatly fitted into a groove cut for the purpose, and the ends of the broken bone were thus kept in contact with each other.

It was further alleged that dentistry was practised by the same people, and that beautiful teeth of mother of pearl were fitted into the jaw, to which they were attached by fine threads of sinnet. Though I believe that discussion was allowed after the lecture, no one questioned these astounding statements. I have been much in New Britain, but even if I ever had seen those two operations I should hardly have ventured to tell any one about them for fear of being disbelieved. Extraordinary surgical operations are practised in New Britain, no doubt, but those two beat any I have heard of. Certainly, an immense amount of nonsense has been talked and written about the Pacific Islands, and statements have been accepted at home which seem perfectly marvellous to us out here.

I recollect having an extract sent me from England, out of the *Gardener's Chronicle.* It had been copied from some other paper, and the contributor was one who ought to have known better. It gravely stated that in an island in the Louisiade Archipelago there was a bone-eating tree. Like the fly-catching plants, the branches of this tree would, it was said, droop at night till they touched the ground, and then any bones or scraps of meat which had been left there by the natives, out of superstitious fear of the "spirit of the grove," would be picked up, and assimilated before morning. The gentleman, who was responsible for this story, said it must be true, because he had seen the tree. I also have seen the tree, and many others like it.

Another reason adduced for its truth was that "a white man" had assured him that this was the truth. I don't know any white man living in the Louisiades, but I should like to meet that one, as he must have a merry wit.

As a matter of fact many trees are to be seen, all over the Pacific, quite full of bones. They are special trees, under which the natives have their feasts on certain occasions; and various bones—shin, thigh, and jaw-bones especially—are arranged in the forks of the branches. After a lapse of years the wood grows round these bones, and sometimes completely covers them. In some trees many hundreds may be seen.

Then there is the story of the tribe with tails, in New Guinea. I believe some men assert that they have been within a day's march of them. All I can say is that it seems a pity that the explorers should have stopped at a day's march away from them. Perhaps the tailed race lives in the Dutch territory, where all sorts of eccentricities may exist.

I was told once, by a man who professed to be an eye-witness, that the natives of Orangerie Bay, and the south-east coast of New Guinea, bored a hole through the left hand, to fire their arrows through. I did not believe him, and have found no subsequent reason for doing so.

At home it is much like Marryat's story of Pharaoh's chariot wheels, and the flying fish. When I was last in England I found very few people who would believe

in the possibility of making fire with two sticks. I might perhaps have convinced them of its practicability, as it is not a very difficult thing to do. As to cannibalism, most of my friends in England scouted the idea, and declared that since the Maories of New Zealand had given up that practice, it had ceased to exist. I suppose they quite forgot Fiji. But, if I had told them these tales of bone-eating trees, or of men with tails or perforated hands, they would as likely as not have believed them.

In spite, however, of all this display of ignorance and credulity combined, there is no doubt that we do possess a good deal of knowledge with regard to Bougainville and the other places I have mentioned at the commencement of this chapter. The men, however, by whom these places are chiefly visited, viz. the traders in island produce, captains of labour ships, and (in former years) the "black-birders" and sandal-wood traders, are not of a class to be able to make intelligent observations of habits and industries; nor are they, as a general rule, by any means anxious to place on record a faithful account of all their transactions. In the Solomon Islands, on the occasion of my last visit there, the white population consisted of only three individuals, and they lived in the southern part of the group, not daring even to land on such islands as Buka or Bougainville. From conversations I have had with natives of these islands, I feel convinced that the bush tribes of the large Solomon Islands would well repay a visit. Their

atrocious superstitions, in the exercise of which human life is sacrificed by every ingenious torture that a savage can invent; their old "devil men," the high priests of their tribes; the magnificent carved sacrificial temples, and the ceremonies attendant on eating the victims, must all be of great interest. To a man of science, the fauna and flora would present many new and valuable varieties, and a study of the native pharmacopœia and wonderful surgical operations, which, however, are employed more for mutilation than for any curative purpose, would prove of much interest.

To the best of my belief, only one white man has ever seen the interior of Bougainville, and that was doubtless much against his will, for he was sold to a bush tribe to be disposed of as they thought best. He was an Italian, whose name I forget. I saw him on the occasion of my first visit to New Britain, but it was impossible to obtain any information from him concerning his former captors, as he was hopelessly imbecile, and never opened his lips except to ask for food. He had been one of the miserable so-called colonists of the Marquis de Ray's expedition to New Britain, of whose misfortunes and sufferings a short account is given in another chapter. After long endurance of terrible hardships, my Italian friend and five others at last resolved to escape at any price from a place which had been represented to them at home as an El Dorado, but which proved in reality an Inferno; and with this object in view they stole a boat

and made for the Solomon Islands. It seems strange that they should not have known of the existence of white traders and missionaries at Blanche Bay, only a hundred miles off, and should have chosen the Solomons for a refuge. On their arrival at Bougainville they were all killed with the exception of the Italian, who seems even then to have been a person of feeble intellect. He was sold to a bush tribe, and became as big a cannibal as any of them, possibly from reasons of policy, but more probably because he saw nothing objectionable in the habit. He made his escape to the coast, after living a year with these savages, and was eventually bought for two tomahawks by the crew of a labour ship. They doubtless thought he was a native, worth twenty-five pounds to them in Queensland, and when they found he was an Italian who could not be sold into servitude, he was left at New Britain, as having no further commercial value.

I believe that, with prudence, all the inland tribes of these great islands could be visited. Many Buka men have asked me to visit them, and have promised me their protection. It is more difficult now, however, than it ever was formerly, to establish friendly relations with the islanders, as many outrages have been committed by white men, which have not yet been "paid for," and which, on the existing system of "a life for a life," will most undoubtedly not be forgotten, even though it should be years before an opportunity arises for avenging them.

It is a humiliating but undoubted fact, that the more natives have been in contact with white men the more difficult they are of access. The reason for this is rather difficult to find. The native's memory is very short in all matters which concern himself alone. He would never forget or forgive the murder of a friend or relation, nor would he neglect any opportunity of avenging it. But supposing a native to be kidnapped from his home in a manner which he resents deeply at the time, nevertheless, in a few weeks he has almost lost all sense of injury, and has in his new sensations of security from hostile tribes, of pride in wearing his flannel shirt and trousers, of having plenty of meat to eat, and in the gratification of his anxiety to see the world (a feeling which all natives possess in a large degree), probably forgotten that he was taken on board the ship against his will, and feels quite contented with his lot. These last remarks, however, only apply to the Solomon Islanders, for it is a most common thing for natives of other groups to die of nostalgia before they are even landed in Fiji or Queensland.

On his arrival at the plantation the native is not treated badly as a general rule, but he preserves no feeling of gratitude for this after he has severed his connection with the white man's country. He always seems to remain a savage, and returns to his own country with the fierce instincts of his race as strong in him as ever, and with the additional knowledge that he has

acquired during his absence. His friends immediately deprive him of all his trade goods on his return to them; and from some extraordinary process of reasoning in his own mind, he feels that he has been unfairly treated by his late white masters on this account. Finding his house and garden appropriated by the chief during his absence, and his wife taken possession of by some member of his tribe, he feels himself an utter outcast among his own people, and this increases his feeling of indignation, not against his tribe, but against the white men.

However, from whatever cause it may arise, it is always more agreeable to have dealings with natives who do not know white men, such as the Admiralty Islanders and the inhabitants of the north coast of New Guinea, than with those who, while retaining all their own bad qualities, have added to them some of the worst of civilized habits. Those who have had no experience of the white man have no injuries to avenge, though they sometimes may attempt a stranger's life out of pure curiosity.

For this reason a white man was killed in the Admiralties. The natives were really anxious to elevate him to the dignity of a god, but they wished first to ascertain whether he would bleed on being wounded. To satisfy their curiosity on this point they threw spears at him till he died, after which he was cut up into innumerable small pieces, and each piece was buried separately, so as to insure his not returning

to life again. They were, however, very sorry afterwards for what they had done; and the house the white man lived in, and the smoke-house for the *bêche de mer* which he had erected, were carefully railed off and looked upon as sacred.

Mr. Miklaho Maclay, an accomplished Russian naturalist, who lived for a long time in the north of New Guinea, relates a story of how he first landed on the north coast of that island, since called the Maclay Coast. He chose to make his appearance in a somewhat dramatic manner. He was discovered sitting on the beach, on his portmanteau, the ship which had landed him having disappeared during the night. The natives, who were unaware that white men existed in the world, naturally were much astonished at their strange visitor, and immediately ascribed a divine origin to him. This idea was encouraged by Maclay, who pointed to the sky and then to himself. His divine nature was, however, to be proved by some very material tests, two of which took the form of arrows, which struck him in the head. After this he was tied to a tree, spears were forced in an unpleasant manner down his throat, and the result of his reception was that he nearly died of his injuries. On his recovery he was still treated as a superior being, and lived with these people for nearly two years. He was supposed to come from the moon, though they knew from his own account that he was a Russian. There was no reason, however, to prevent their believing that Russia was situated in the moon.

Mr. Maclay's observations and sketches of the people of North New Guinea would be most valuable, but at present he refuses to publish any account of his travels. He is, I believe, shortly, by the Czar's command, to write a book on Polynesia, in German. It will probably be an interesting work, for he is the only scientific man who has travelled largely in the Pacific. His sketches are most accurate, but as his speciality is craniology he may possibly entirely omit many subjects of interest to the general public. He has, however, described some new marsupials, notably a tree-climbing kangaroo.

In my next chapter I propose to make a few observations on New Britain, a country which I do not think has ever been visited by him.

CHAPTER II.

NEW BRITAIN.

New Britain is a large island lying between East Longitude 148° and 152°, and in South Latitude 7° and 4°. It is separated from New Guinea by Dampier Straits, and can be seen on clear days from that country.

It has had the benefit of having been visited by three scientific men, first among whom is Doctor Finsch, the eminent ornithologist. Mr. Kleinschmidt stayed there two years, and was murdered, with two assistants, by the natives. The Rev. Mr. Brown also has contributed much to our knowledge of the natural history of the country. Dr. Finsch has recently returned to New Britain, to complete his observations there.

Very little is known of the western half of the island. The natives there are very savage, and fiercely resent any attempt to land. They are very fine men, and have much more of the South Eastern Papuan type than their neighbours of the north-eastern half. They use weapons there, however, which are unknown to the

Papuans—notably, the sling. This is a most formidable implement as they use it. It is about eight feet long, but each sling varies in length according to the height of the man using it. The stone, which is as big as a small hen's egg, is put in very cleverly with the toes, and the action of lifting the sling to obtain the proper swing round the head is a very graceful one to witness. The New Britons make excellent practice up to nearly two hundred yards, and at a hundred yards range the flight of the stone is so rapid that to dodge it successfully requires a native's eyesight and activity. I would far sooner let a native of New Britain have a shot at me with a trade musket than with a sling.

Wide Bay, on the south coast, is the first place where intercourse with the natives becomes possible. Beginning at this place, and extending as far as North Cape, the natives seem to change in appearance completely from the inhabitants of the western half of the island. Here one sees the woolly hair, thick noses and lips, and retreating foreheads, none of which are characteristic of the Papuan race.

I observed one peculiarity about them which I have only seen in rare cases in other groups. A very large percentage is deformed about the hands and feet. Two thumbs on one hand are commonly to be seen. I noticed sometimes six toes on a foot, and sometimes only four, and the toes are not unfrequently joined together by a tough membrane. These defects, however, do not seem to impair their activity. Albinos are

very common, and are usually idiots. They have either light blue or pink eyes, and in the daylight are almost blind. The natives say that at night these albinos can use their eyes to great advantage. Neither men nor women wear any garments, even of the most rudimentary form.

At Blanche Bay, where I lived for the greater part of my stay in New Britain, the people were becoming fairly civilized, and the efforts of the three gentlemen of the Wesleyan Mission have done a considerable amount of good.

The great drawback to the country is its poisonous climate. No one escapes attacks of fever, more or less severe; even the natives themselves suffer severely. The month of April is the worst, that being the period of the break between the two seasons of the south-east and the north-west trade-winds. At that time the heavy rains have come to an end, and the sun is drying up the swamps in the interior, the malaria from which is carried over the country every night by the land breeze. Even in New Guinea, popularly supposed to be one of the most unhealthy countries in the world, I have never seen such violent fever as in New Britain.

Of the north coast but little is known. It seems to be either entirely uninhabited, or else the towns are very few and far between. In 1881 I coasted a considerable part of it, and landed once or twice, but I never saw any natives. There are probably bush

tribes not far from the coast, who have pushed their way across from the south.

Inland from Blanche Bay the bush population is very thick, and very warlike. There are no towns, but for miles and miles into the interior houses are seen dotted about, built on the top of the steepest and most inaccessible rocks. This sufficiently proves that the hand of every man is against his neighbour.

The native tracks are most heart-breaking. In making a path, the last object considered necessary is to choose the easiest and quickest way between two points. The native workmen go out of their way to ascend a hill, and always take the path over the steepest part till the summit is reached, after which nothing remains but to descend the other side. Of course the idea is always to be on the look-out for hidden enemies, and as the New Briton will ascend the steepest hill without even a quickening of the breath, it does not matter much to him. But a ten-mile walk over this sort of country is quite as much as the most energetic white pedestrian would care about.

The bush natives did not seem to me so interesting as those of the coast. The constant state of vendetta warfare in which they live prevents them from having any towns, temples, or any of the strange things which are to be met with among the bush tribes of other countries. They trade a little with the coast, chiefly for salt, but as rarely as possible, as their negotiations with each other almost always end in a fight.

One of the strangest institutions in New Britain is the shell money in circulation. As it there enters into nearly every detail of daily life, and as every superstitious practice seems to have been invented for the purpose of amassing large quantities of it, it may be as well to describe it carefully. The money itself is composed of a number of small cowrie shells, threaded on small strips of cane. The native name for it is de-warra, and by that name I shall speak of it. It is supposed to be a mystery where the shells are found. The natives will point vaguely to the eastward, and say, "From over there." My belief, however, is that the shell is widely distributed, but as it is very small, and is found in very deep water, the difficulties of collecting it are great, and it is accordingly accepted as an article of value.

There are many reasons for supposing that a tribe in the vicinity of Cape Lambert have the monopoly of manufacturing de-warra, and as all natives are the most conservative people in the world, no other tribe has ever attempted to issue what might be regarded as base money.

The farther one gets to the westward the more valuable this shell money becomes, which seems to bear out the theory that it comes from the east. When it is issued from the mint, each piece of money is some thirty feet in length. A species of vine is selected, from which a single thread of that length can be obtained, and on this the shells are strung as close together as possible. An inch of de-warra contains

about twelve shells, so that each perfect piece of money would have not less than 4320 of them.

As the de-warra becomes distributed about the country, it is cut up into such sizes as may be required. One fathom—that is to say, the extreme stretch of a man's arms—is the recognized amount by which all payments are measured. In most places a pig is worth seven fathoms; the same price is put on a man's life. As one gets to the westward it is to be found cut into pieces of not more than an inch in length, and sometimes large payments are made in these diminutive tenders. Some men amass enormous quantities of it. One bush chief in particular, who lives on the lower spurs of Mount Beautemps-Beauprès, has two large treasure houses full of de-warra from the floor to the roof. He must count his wealth by miles. It is a common thing for children to make a false de-warra of a common shell, and play with it among themselves, driving as hard bargains with each other as their fathers would do with the genuine article. This false money is often offered to strangers, and bought by them and exhibited in museums as de-warra. The genuine money will purchase some sorts of food, such as turtle and pork, which the natives would hardly sell for trade goods.

In the ceremonies attendant on marriages, births, and deaths de-warra plays a great part. When a New Briton dies he is supposed to give a feast after his death, and de-warra is distributed to all the guests

in a lavish manner. I once went to see the burial feast and interment of an old woman who died in Blanche Bay. A crowd of natives was assembled, and in the centre of them the corpse of the old woman was propped up against a tree. Her face was painted blue, and the rest of her body was coloured in a fantastic manner. The feasting was over, and the old lady was about to distribute de-warra to pay for her burial. In her hands she held two coils of it, and there was a large quantity hung round her neck. The husband broke it all up, and threw a piece to each guest. Some had large pieces, and others small, but every one seemed satisfied. Then a piece was thrown into the grave, to pay the evil spirits, and the woman was put in on the top of it, in a sitting position. Then all her worldly goods, including a bottle of carbolic lotion, were buried with her, and the ceremony was concluded.

A man will, in the ordinary affairs of life, hoard up his de-warra like any miser, and sometimes conceal it in the bush for greater security; but on special occasions, like the one I have described, he will distribute it with the greatest liberality.

It also plays a great part in the marriage ceremony. A man is usually betrothed at an early age, to enable him to pay for his wife before he is overtaken by old age. The payments required by a girl's parents are enormous, but are not as a rule meant to be paid in full. When the betrothed couple are grown up, and a considerable portion at least of the girl's price has

been paid, the man builds a little house in the bush and elopes with his bride. The father thereupon collects his friends, and they sally forth, apparently in great anger, to kill the bridegroom. It is needless to say they do not find him, as they have no wish to do so, but they burn the house he has erected for his honeymoon; and not unfrequently, on their return home, find the young married couple comfortably established in their own town.

Should the elopement take place, however, before the bride's father has given a hint that he is satisfied with the payment already received, the expedition would be undertaken in real earnest, and, till the affair had blown over, the bridegroom would have to live in exile.

One of the most unfortunate things for the stranger visiting New Britain, and one that makes intercourse with the natives most difficult, is the fact that there are no actual chiefs.

A man is considered a man of weight in his tribe according to the amount of de-warra he may possess, but he exercises no authority over the young men, no decision of his would be final in a question of peace or war, and they would not look to him to lead them into battle. Should the country ever be annexed to any civilized power, this absence of responsible men will make the task of government a most difficult one.

There is, however, a most curious and interesting institution, by which the old men of the tribe band

themselves together, and, by working on the superstitions of the rest, secure for themselves a comfortable old age and unbounded influence. This institution is called the Duk-Duk (pronounced Dook-Dook), and owing to the intense mystery with which it is surrounded, and the extreme difficulty of getting natives to talk about it, or even to mention the fearful word Duk-Duk, the only way to learn anything about it is to watch it carefully one's self, and draw one's own conclusions. As to its origin no theory can be formed, and probably the native traditions do not go back as far as the first appearance of the Duk-Duk. As there are several theories as to the meaning and actual results of this custom, I merely give my own ideas on the subject for what they are worth. I can only say that I have studied the custom very carefully, and I have been allowed to see ceremonies of initiation into its mysteries, which have been denied to others.

The Duk-Duk is a spirit, which assumes a visible and presumably tangible form, and makes its appearance at certain fixed times. Its arrival is invariably fixed for the day the new moon becomes visible. It is announced a month beforehand by the old men, and is always said to belong to one of them. During that month great preparations of food are made, and should any young man have failed to provide an adequate supply on the occasion of its last appearance, he receives a pretty strong hint to the effect that the Duk-

Duk is displeased with him, and there is no fear of his offending twice.

When it is remembered that the old men, who alone have the power of summoning the Duk-Duk from his home at the bottom of the sea, are too weak to work, and to provide themselves with food or de-warra, the reason for this hint seems to me pretty obvious.

The day before the Duk-Duk's expected arrival the women usually disappear, or at all events remain in their houses. It is immediate death for a woman to look upon this unquiet spirit.

Before daybreak every one is assembled on the beach, most of the young men looking a good deal frightened. They have many unpleasant experiences to go through during the next fortnight, and the Duk-Duk is known to possess an extraordinary familiarity with all their shortcomings of the preceding month.

At the first streak of dawn, singing and drum-beating is heard out at sea, and, as soon as there is enough light to see them, five or six canoes, lashed together with a platform built over them, are seen to be slowly advancing towards the beach.

Two most extraordinary figures appear dancing on the platform, uttering shrill cries, like a small dog yelping. They seem to be about ten feet high, but so rapid are their movements that it is difficult to observe them carefully. However, the outward and visible form assumed by them is intended to represent a gigantic cassowary, with the most hideous and grotesque of

human faces. The dress, which is made of the leaves of the draconæna, certainly looks much like the body of this bird, but the head is like nothing but the head of a Duk-Duk. It is a conical-shaped erection, about five feet high, made of very fine basket work, and gummed all over to give a surface on which the diabolical countenance is depicted. No arms or hands are visible, and the dress extends down to the knees. The old men doubtless are in the secret, but by the alarmed look on the faces of the others it is easy to see that they imagine that there is nothing human about these alarming visitors.

As soon as the canoes touch the beach, the two Duk-Duks jump out, and at once the natives fall back, so as to avoid touching them. If a Duk-Duk is touched, even by accident, he very frequently tomahawks the unfortunate native on the spot.

After landing, the Duk-Duks dance round each other, imitating the ungainly motion of the cassowary, and uttering their shrill cries. During the whole of their stay they make no sound but this. It would never do for them to speak, for in that case they might be recognized by their voices.

Nothing more is to be done now till evening, and they occupy their time in running up and down the beach, through the village, and into the bush, and seem to be very fond of turning up in the most unexpected manner, and frightening the natives half out of their wits.

During the day a little house has been built in the bush, for the Duk-Duk's benefit. No one but the old men knows exactly where this house is, as it is carefully concealed. Here we may suppose the restless spirit unbends to a certain extent, and has his meals. Certainly no one would venture to disturb him.

In the evening a vast pile of food is collected, and is borne off by the old men into the bush, every man making his contribution to the meal. The Duk-Duk, if satisfied, maintains a complete silence; but if he does not think the amount collected sufficient, he shows his disapprobation by yelping and leaping.

When the food has been carried off, the young men have to go through a very unpleasant ordeal, which is supposed to prepare their minds for having the mysteries of the Duk-Duk explained to them at some very distant period. They stand in rows of six or seven, holding their arms high above their heads. When the Duk-Duks appear from their house in the bush, one of them has a bundle of stout canes, about six feet long, and the other a big club. The Duk-Duk with the canes selects one of them, and dances up to one of the young men, and deals him a most tremendous blow, which draws blood all round his body. There is, however, on the young man's part no flinching or sign of pain. After the blow with the cane he has to stoop down, and the other Duk-Duk gives him a blow with the club, on the "tail," which must be most

unpleasant. Each one of these young men has to go through this performance some twenty times in the course of the evening, and go limping home to bed. He will nevertheless be ready to place himself in the same position every night for the next fortnight. The time of a man's initiation may and often does last for about twenty years, and as the Duk-Duk usually appears at every town six times in every year, the novice has to submit to a considerable amount of flogging to purchase his freedom of the guild.

Though I have never witnessed it, the Duk-Duk has the right, which he frequently exercises, of killing any man on the spot. He merely dances up to him, and brains him with a tomahawk or club. Not a man would dare dispute this right, nor would any one venture to touch the body afterwards. The Duk-Duks in such a case pick up the body, and carry it into the bush, where it is disposed of: how, one can only conjecture. Women, if caught suddenly in the bush, are carried off, and never appear again, nor are any inquiries made after them.

It is no doubt this power the Duk-Duks possess, of killing either man or woman with impunity, which makes them so feared.

It is, above all things, necessary to preserve the mystery; and the way in which this is done is very clever. The man personating the Duk-Duk will retire to his house, take off his dress, and mingle with the rest of his tribe, so as not to be missed, and will put

his share of food into the general contribution, thus making a present to himself.

The last day on which the moon is visible the Duk-Duks disappear, though no one sees them depart; their house in the bush is burned, and the dresses they have worn are destroyed. Great care is taken to destroy everything they have touched, the canes and clubs being burned every day by the old men.

They seem to object very much to strangers watching them; but I was told on several occasions that I might witness their ceremonies, on condition that I did not speak.

From all the crowds of natives assembled, not a sound was to be heard, and it was only necessary to look at their faces to realize with what fear they watched the proceedings.

There is no doubt in my mind that, when the old men are in want of food or de-warra, a Duk-Duk is summoned for the purpose of providing it.

As an instance of the fear with which even the dress they wear is regarded, I may mention that on one occasion Lieutenant M——, of H.M.S. *Beagle*, procured the conical-shaped cap worn, and rather imprudently carried it in broad daylight into the store of Mr. H——, who had a station in Blanche Bay. The natives rushed off in extreme terror when they saw it, and at last Mr. H—— had to request Lieutenant M—— to take it on board his ship at night, as no native would even come into the yard while it was known to be there.

There are places in New Guinea where there is much the same sort of superstition with respect to the Duk-Duk as in New Britain. In New Guinea, however, there are many points of difference. They come in much greater numbers, sometimes as many as eighty at a time, but they seem to require the same amount of respect to be shown to them as their New Britain relations do. The dress, too, is different; in New Guinea the whole body is concealed. There are many points of resemblance between the New Guinea Duk-Duk and the Jacks-in-the-Green, to be seen in London on the first of May.

The Duk-Duk is often supposed to leave behind him in the bush some carved figure which is intended to exercise a baneful effect on the district it is left in. Any catastrophe which might occur, or sudden death, would be ascribed to it. For a long time Mr. H—— and I were doubtful whether these images were real or imaginary. No one had ever seen them, but still the natives asserted positively that they existed, and that if we liked to search for ourselves they would point out places in the bush where they might be found. After much searching we found three, though there were many that no doubt existed which we could not find. These three we carried off in triumph, much to the natives' delight. They showed signs of great age, for they were covered with moss, and a good deal injured by exposure to the weather. They were made of a very hard chalk, which seemed to indicate

that they were of New Ireland and not New Britain manufacture, as chalk exists in New Ireland, but, as far as I know, not in New Britain.

The natives evidently thought that life would go smoothly for them after the removal of the figures, in which expectation I hope they have not been disappointed. We heard of images carved out of hard basaltic rock, but were unable to find any.

It was supposed that misfortune would at once visit Mr. H——'s house on account of our sacrilege, but these spirits' malignant powers must have grown rusty from long exposure.

Very much the same superstition exists here as formerly existed in England. If a wooden likeness is carved of any man against whom a grudge exists, and is buried in the bush, the poor man will, it is believed, die in great torments. After every meal, any refuse which is left is carefully burned, for should some evil-disposed person bury so much as a banana skin, the man who neglected to destroy it will be overtaken with awful consequences.

The chief devil of New Britain lives down at the bottom of an active volcano in Blanche Bay. He has fortunately not exerted his powers since 1878. For three days of that year the volcano was in violent eruption. A considerable island was formed in the centre of the harbour, by the débris which fell, and the whole of St. George's Channel, between New Britain and New Ireland, was so blocked up with

pumice-stone that it was almost impossible for a ship to force her way through it.

I could never obtain a guide to take me up this mountain; Mr. H—— and I, however, made the ascent by ourselves, but the ground was so rotten and so hot, that we were afraid to explore it thoroughly.

Earthquake shocks are very frequent at Blanche Bay, occurring on an average about twice every week. There are also many boiling sulphur springs in the neighbourhood, one of which is large enough to admit of a boat being pulled up it for half a mile.

It is a curious fact, in a place where natives suffer so severely from skin diseases, that they should never utilize these springs. It would be more pleasant for their visitors if they did.

The dances in New Britain are hardly worth alluding to. They are merely monotonous movements of the hands and feet. The men, however, wear masks, made out of skulls, while dancing, which gives them a diabolical look.

Altogether, New Britain is a country of very great interest, and I am aware that this very short sketch can give but little idea of it. Before any traveller can begin his operations in earnest he must stay a month or two at Blanche Bay, and study the language, otherwise he will have endless misunderstandings with the natives.

The recent action of the German Government there will do much towards adding to our knowledge of the

natives, and of the interior. The trade already going on is very considerable, and will of course be extended as fresh settlers arrive; but whether the undoubted wealth of the country can be properly developed is a problem which remains to be seen, and one which will depend entirely on the class of men who first visit the country as its pioneers.

CHAPTER III.

CANNIBALISM IN NEW IRELAND.

A FEW years ago most people would have said in reading this title, "Where is New Ireland?" Possibly up to so recent a date as a year ago, not many could have answered the question; but to-day most careful readers of the newspapers are aware that New Ireland is an island in the Western Pacific Ocean, situated between 2° and 5° south latitude, and 150° and 153° east longitude: that it forms part of what is known as the New Britain group, and that recently the German flag has been hoisted at various spots, both on the coast of New Britain and New Ireland.

The island has an unusual geological formation. Though nearly three hundred miles long, it is in no part more than fifteen miles in width, and in some places it is possible to walk across it and come back in one day. Down its centre runs a range of mountains, which attain an elevation of seven thousand feet, and are of necessity extremely rugged and precipitous.

They are thickly wooded to the summit, and only the lower spurs are inhabited.

The bush natives, if such they can be called, living so near to the sea as they do, unlike the generality of bush tribes, live on friendly terms with their coast neighbours.

I have sailed round New Ireland, and no sign of a river either large or small is anywhere to be seen. The rainfall is, nevertheless, very heavy, and it is to be presumed that lakes exist in the interior. If so, their position is at present unknown.

There has been very little communication between the inhabitants of New Ireland and white men. They bear the reputation of being treacherous savages, and up to the present time they have fully justified their bad character.

Moreover, it cannot be said that they have profited by the little intercourse with whites which has hitherto taken place. The labour vessels have taken away some two thousand of the best men—a loss which, out of a population of at the outside fifty thousand, is felt severely.

Of the goods left behind by the labour ships in exchange for labourers, the muskets become useless with rust and neglect; glass beads and trade calico soon lose their charm, and the merits of tobacco are only beginning to be appreciated, just as the supply is becoming exhausted. Then the New Irelanders find themselves in a bad way indeed: the deadly weapons,

on which they relied, useless; their tribe weakened by the loss of their best men; and their neighbours threatening on account of this loss. It is most unlikely that they will bless the memory of the foreigners who "civilized" them: and woe betide the harmless naturalist or botanist who should pay them a visit in the interest of science!

When I visited the country in July, 1883, the evil had only just commenced, and they did not realize its disastrous consequences. They were then like children, somewhat savage and difficult children to manage, with their new toys.

They had a disagreeable habit at that time of trying their muskets on any ship, whether in range or not. I confess I don't think they ever did any damage, except to themselves, for occasionally the wretched Birmingham musket was quite unable to stand the tremendous charge of equally wretched powder that was put into it.

At the time I was in New Britain, there was an enterprising German gentleman, a Mr. H——, who had at great personal risk gained a footing in the country some years before. He had already established several stations for buying island produce in New Britain, and had quite recently started two stations close together, at the extreme northern end of New Ireland. I regret to say that a very short time ago these stations were burned by the natives, and the traders barely escaped with their lives into their boats.

I was luckily able to charter this gentleman's schooner, the *Montiara,* being most anxious to see New Ireland, and to observe some of the habits of the natives. I was told that I could procure interpreters at the German station, and Mr. H—— wrote his trader a letter, ordering him to render me every assistance in his power. Accordingly, when everything was ready, we made sail for Neusa, the name of Mr. H——'s New Ireland station.

On our arrival there we found Mr. B—— very civil and very glad to see us, the more so as we brought him up a fresh stock of provisions. I told him of my wish to go down the east coast, and asked for advice as to the best place to effect a first landing. He recommended a place called Kapsu, about forty miles down the coast. Nanati, the young chief of Kapsu, was in frequent communication with Neusa. It appeared that the Kapsu shell money was considered very valuable at Neusa, and *vice versâ,* and that this young chief took advantage of the fact, and was rapidly amassing a large fortune.

It was, however, declared to be impossible to take the schooner down the coast, on account of the strong south-east trade-winds then blowing, and I discovered that if the expedition was to be undertaken at all it must be in a whale boat. Accordingly one of the station boats was placed at my disposal by Mr. B——, with a boat's crew of six Solomon Islanders from Bougainville. These Solomon Islanders, in their own homes,

were as great savages as the men we were going to visit, but once away from home there are no men more to be relied on. I also took with me Captain S——, the master of the schooner, and a boy of sixteen as interpreter, whose polysyllabic native name had been conveniently abbreviated to "Bill."

After provisioning the boat for a fortnight, we sailed one evening at sunset, so as to avoid the sun, and to take advantage of the land breeze. By noon, the next day, we were in sight of Fischer Island, a place shown on the chart by a confused outline of dots.

Fischer Island in reality consists of three islands, but I can understand a passing ship mistaking them for only one. Here are carved the most fantastic and extraordinary of the idols which occasionally find their way over to New Ireland.

To the best of my belief no one has ever landed on Fischer Island, and nothing is known of its inhabitants beyond the fact that they are at war with the New Ireland natives, and would most certainly attack any foreigners who attempted to land on their shores.

Our destination, Kapsu, was on the coast, nearly opposite these islands, and as soon as we came in sight of the marks which had been previously described to us, we pulled slowly into the beach. About a hundred yards from the shore we dropped a kedge, and backed in, but hitherto we had seen no natives.

Bill, who showed signs of shirking his work, though he was well known here, was now compelled to stand

up and shout out at the top of his voice, apparently to the empty beach, that we wished to land, and to see Nanati the chief. Presently a native made his appearance, and took stock of us, and then one or two more appeared as if by magic from the bush, till a small crowd collected, and an animated conversation commenced.

"Might we land and see Nanati's village? and was Nanati there himself?"

After a brief interval, Nanati himself came running to the beach, and welcomed us ashore, and professed himself very glad to see us. I had provided myself with some of the Neusa money, considered so valuable at Kapsu, and I lost no time in presenting Nanati with a handful of it.

All this time natives were appearing in twos and threes, till at last we had a large crowd round us. Nothing could be more friendly than they were, but we had to submit to an immense amount of pinching, and poking, and feeling of clothes. The general opinion seemed to be that my face was painted white, and when I unbuttoned my shirt to satisfy public curiosity, a shriek of surprise, followed by a roar of laughter, was the result. They rubbed my face with their hands till it really appeared probable that I should shortly become as black as they were. At last they seemed to make up their minds that we were freaks of nature, and we began to walk up to the town. I left the boat anchored a hundred yards

from the beach, in charge of two of the crew, with strict orders that they were not to leave it on any account.

The town is situated about half a mile from the beach, and was very clean and well kept. In the centre of it was a large open space, a hundred yards in diameter, in one corner of which was a very complicated labyrinth, which surrounded a house containing some most grotesque carvings.

The passages in this labyrinth were built of reeds, and so narrow and so low were they that a man would have had to crawl on all fours to get through them; nor would he have reached the house inside, supposing him to be familiar with the innumerable passages, till he had covered a distance of some hundreds of yards.

Later on, when I was allowed to see this sacred joss house, my way was smoothed for me by Nanati, who went before with a native axe and simply cut his way through everything.

When we arrived at the temple (for want of a better name) I was not allowed to look at it very long. Only a few old men had followed us, and by the solemn way in which they shook their heads they seemed to think that no good would result from the shrine being exposed to sacrilegious eyes. The women had previously all been driven out of the village, apparently to guard against the possibility of their seeing any of the hidden mysteries. In the temple were some six

or seven hideous painted figures, between three and four feet high, and innumerable small carvings of birds and fishes; besides these, on a shelf were some half-dozen of the curious helmets, which in shape and appearance so much resemble the helmets of the ancient Greeks. More curious still to relate, almost exact facsimiles of these helmets can be seen at the present day in the museum of Honolulu.

As the old men were getting impatient, I had reluctantly to leave the "temple" to itself. Nanati apologized for their fears with a most sarcastic smile, but seemed to think it as well to give in to them.

No sooner were we back in the village than the holes in the passages were built up again, and the gods of the tribe, if indeed the figures were gods, were left to their former solitude, not to be disturbed possibly till the next sacrilegious stranger goes that way.

Meanwhile the curiosity of the ladies of the tribe with respect to Captain S—— and myself, was becoming embarrassing. Captain S——, who is "a fine figure of a man," and portly withal, became the object of many most improper jokes. Nanati, however, suddenly came to the rescue with a stick, and drove the ladies off; whereat we considered the tables turned, and laughed at them.

I had taken care, according to my invariable custom, to make a small present to every old woman I saw. There is no better general rule to observe among savages than this, and many a life has been saved

by the intercession of the old women. Before I left Kapsu I had reason to be glad I had done so.

As my visit to this coast was by no means entirely for my own amusement, but chiefly on matters of business, I asked Nanati to send north and south for as many of his friends as he could collect from different tribes, and the whole of his own tribe were ordered to come in. His own tribe covered about fifteen miles of coast, and his land reached inland as far as the mountain range.

The day after my arrival some fifteen hundred men had collected together. Early in the morning of the day after their arrival, I went up to Nanati's town, where I found every one assembled. We all sat down in the open space, and after a dead silence I began to tell them my business; of this, however, it is not necessary that I should say anything here.

After I had been speaking for about ten minutes, a native rushed suddenly into our midst, evidently much excited; he pointed to the sea, and made an announcement which had the effect of immediately dispersing my meeting. It broke up in the wildest confusion, and in a few seconds my party and myself were entirely deserted.

We immediately went down to the beach, where the boat was, and, on our arrival there, we had not to look far for an explanation of the sudden panic. A large fleet of war canoes was coming round the point, and was quite close to the beach. Those on board were

making the most hideous din: blowing their horns, and beating their shields with their spears. There were twenty-five canoes, each holding from thirty to fifty men.

Though the enemy had come on us very suddenly, our tribe had armed themselves in an incredibly short space of time, and were now collected on the beach, awaiting the landing of the foe.

They have a system of keeping small storehouses near the beach, full of spears, so as to prevent the supply running short.

On the edge of the bush were the women and boys, all holding bundles of spears for the warriors. The most awful noise was going on. My young friend Nanati had turned into a raging maniac apparently, and all his tribe followed his example. I had little doubt as to what would be the result of the battle which was about to be fought. Owing to the fact that Nanati had collected his whole tribe, and a number of his allies of other tribes, he had an unusually strong force at his disposal, and though the attacking force must have numbered nearly a thousand men, yet we were fully five hundred men stronger.

I had some difficulty in keeping my Solomon Islanders in check, for their blood was up, and they wished to join in with their Winchester rifles. However, I kept my little party about a hundred yards in the rear, and we waited to see what would happen.

It appeared that no attempt was to be made to

oppose the landing. The canoes were shot over the surf, and paddled in shore till they grounded on the coral. Immediately their crews leaped out, formed into two very fair lines, and made a rush for the beach. This rush was not directed against us, however, as they reached the beach some hundred yards in our front.

Our people seemed to have their own rules of warfare, which were strictly observed. Not a spear had as yet been thrown, though the enemy might have been taken at a great disadvantage while they were in the water.

And now the two tribes were drawn up, facing each other on the beach. Every man was executing a step of his own, while he brandished his spears and beat them against his shield. Then suddenly two of the enemy danced out, about twenty yards in front of their line, and were promptly met by two of our men.

Even now the warriors did not intend to begin fighting; they had merely come out to boast. They seemed to know each other by name, and they danced in front of each other, exhausting their powers of abuse till they really could think of nothing more to say. Then they fell back, always keeping their faces to each other, and five or six men took their places; sometimes there were as many as twenty or thirty on each side, simply pouring out abuse, and boasting of their own bravery, and of what they meant to do. Each man, as he jumped out, called to an enemy, by name, to meet

him. I thought this boasting would never come to an end. Most of their utterances were grossly indecent, and quite unfit to write down.

At last Nanati was in front for the first time, edging almost imperceptibly towards his insulter.

Now—just as that worthy is giving a bound into the air in the excitement of delivering an insult of extraordinary malignity, suddenly, like a flash, so unexpected is the movement, Nanati throws his spear at him. It is a long shot, but it requires a very clever duck to dodge it. Nanati is immediately all over the place at once. Half a dozen spears answer his; but, without his even appearing to avoid them, they pass under his arms, between his legs, anywhere but into his body. And now the fight becomes general; men rush to the front in twenties and thirties, throwing their spears with extraordinary rapidity; but though the air seems full of them, no one as yet is hit. Their wonderful accuracy of eye, and the marvellous rapidity of their movements, save them so far. But suddenly the business becomes more serious. There is a man lying on the ground with a spear in his chest. A tremendous yell goes up from both sides, and for a moment they meet in hand to hand conflict. A lane opens through our line, and six men come tearing through it, carrying a dead man amongst them. Near where we are standing the body is handed over to the women, by whom it is conveyed to the town.

In that short ten-seconds' struggle for the body there

was yet time for it to be mutilated almost out of all semblance of a man. It was indeed an unpleasant object to look upon; but the women seemed to like it, and the boys carrying the spare spears drove some through the corpse again and again.

Meanwhile, the area of the fight was extending itself. There was fighting going on in the bush, and out on the reef. The bodies began to be passed back more rapidly, and a good many of our own men came limping out of the fight. Some were being carried back, apparently dead. If a man once went down, whether friend or foe, he was carried out of the *mêlée*, with a dozen ghastly wounds, inflicted by the sharp wooden swords.

And now, at last, the enemy began slowly to fall back; our men pressed them harder and harder till the retreat became a rout, and along the beach and in the bush they were in full flight. It was evident that numbers of them must be killed before they could escape from Nanati's territory, as they had seven or eight miles to go.

Nearly all the canoes had by this time been abandoned, but the men fighting on the reef made a desperate effort, and succeeded in launching some of them, and making good their escape.

No notice whatever was taken of us, either by friend or foe, and as soon as the canoes had escaped, those of our tribe who were left, rushed after their friends along the beach, to aid in the general pursuit. In a

few minutes we were left entirely alone, and the events which we had just witnessed seemed to have been part of some horrible nightmare.

I knew that it would be late before any one returned, so I waded out to the canoes and examined them. They were masterpieces of native construction. Most of them were new, as if they had been built for the occasion. Indeed, it must have been a very severe blow to their owners to find Nanati's tribe mustered in such force. It may probably have taken three years to prepare for this attack, and the unusually strong force they brought would, under ordinary circumstances, have insured their success.

I do not know whether they bore an old grudge against Nanati, or if they merely hankered after the contents of his treasure house. Certainly, this treasure house, which I afterwards saw, contained what was fabulous wealth to the native mind. But, whatever the cause, they undoubtedly came assured of success, and were perhaps a trifle over-confident in their first attack. They seemed to become very rapidly disheartened at the fall of their warriors, and might, I think, have made a better fight of it.

In the canoes we found many bundles of spare spears, many of them carefully carved; native food in abundance, which seemed to indicate that they had come from a considerable distance; war horns, drums, and all the various impedimenta with which a native travels on these occasions.

The thwarts of the canoes were very elaborately carved, as were the paddles. Each canoe had the thwarts wide enough for two men to sit on and paddle; and between them was room for a man to sit in the bottom. This, with men sitting aft to steer, and two or three others forward, to blow horns, would make the crew of each canoe about forty men.

Though I coveted some of the paddles, and my Solomon Islanders the spears, I would allow nothing to be touched, as I wished to keep on good terms with Nanati while I was his guest. I had an idea that that gentleman could be very nasty at times, if he chose. The difference was very marked between the handsome smiling person he had been on our first introduction, and the fiend incarnate of a few hours later. I made up my mind, however, that he ought to be very much obliged to me for being the indirect cause of his brilliant victory, for if it had not been for me, he would have been caught with five hundred men at the outside, to defend himself against a thousand. True, Nanati's men were on their own ground, and could have retreated to the mountains; but his treasure would have been looted, his women carried off, and his towns burned.

Still, I had a misgiving. What would he think of my preventing my five men with their Winchester rifles from taking part in the fight? I determined to put a good face on the matter, and argued to myself that, as he had never seen a rifle fired, he would probably

know nothing of its destructive power. All the same, if I had not been ashamed to do so after his hospitality to me, I think I should have made sail before the return of the men, and deliberately run away.

However, I soon gave up that idea, especially as my men were looking forward eagerly to the festivities of the evening, which doubtless would remind them to a certain extent of their happy homes, where fights in the day time and orgies at night were of common occurrence.

On my arrival at the town there was a great sound of merrymaking and laughter. This was what we saw when we entered it: on the branches of the big tree in the centre of the clear space were six corpses, hanging by the necks, their toes just touching the ground. On examination it was easy to distinguish the spear wounds which had first laid them low. But besides these wounds there were numerous others, which had been inflicted after death, by young savages serving their apprenticeship of war and brutality, and which were sufficiently strong evidence of the desperate nature of those hand-to-hand conflicts which we had seen on the fall of friend or foe.

It was a disgusting sight to me, and it was evident that even my Solomon Islanders disapproved of the unnecessary hacking which the bodies had gone through. The idea in their minds was that, for purposes of the larder, the bodies would have been better with as few wounds as possible.

It is difficult to describe the last act of the drama without causing disgust, but I will endeavour to relate it as cleanly as possible.

After a long pull at my flask, I sat down, with my back to the tree, and watched the women. They had made fires, and were boiling large pots of water. It did not strike me at once what this was for, but I was left a very short time in doubt.

As soon as the water boiled, it was ladled out in cocoa-nut shells, and poured over the bodies one by one, after which they were carefully scraped with bamboo knives. It was simply the process of scalding and scraping that every dead pig goes through after he has been killed. The hair of the head was carefully cut off and preserved, probably to adorn some future helmet.

The women all this time were laughing and joking, discussing the points of each man, most of whom they seemed to have known by name and reputation in life. There were no ceremonies of any sort, so far; the whole thing was done in the most matter-of-fact way possible.

When the bodies had been thoroughly scraped, I was given to understand that nothing more would be done till the return of the men. I therefore returned to my boat for dinner, and did not go near the village again till sunset.

On my return I found a number of men assembled, still excited, but a good deal exhausted with their long

pursuit. Nanati had not come in, and they were waiting for him before doing anything farther. There were several ovens prepared near the tree, and large fires were burning fiercely.

At length Nanati, followed by a string of men, made his appearance. All trace of excitement seemed to have vanished, but of me he took no notice whatever.

It was now that I found out the value of the old women's good will. Nanati was evidently discussing the poor return I had made for his hospitality, and seemed very sore about it indeed. I think the other men did not care much about the matter, as they doubtless considered they had killed quite enough.

All of a sudden the old women took up the cudgels in my defence, and scolded and abused Nanati as only old women can, till at last the poor man, who I think had put on a good deal of his ill temper, was only too glad to give in, and he came and sat down beside me, apparently as friendly as ever.

I told him I knew he would conquer the enemy from the first, and I also told him—what was perfectly true—that if I had seen him getting beaten I would have helped him, as much for our safety as for his. He seemed perfectly satisfied, and after a few compliments had been paid him on his bravery, we all appeared to be on the most friendly terms.

But now the business of the evening was about to commence. A mat of plaited palm-leaves was laid

down, and one of the bodies was cut down from the tree. A very old man, apparently the father of the tribe, advanced into the centre of the crowd, where an open space had been left, to give him room to conduct his operations. He had five or six of the bamboo knives in his hand, and with his thumb-nail he was stripping the fibres off their edges, leaving them as sharp as razors. The body was then placed on the mat, and the first part of the operation must, I am afraid, be left undescribed. Suffice it to say that, after the body had been cleaned, some of the more perishable parts were thrown to the women, as you might throw food to the dogs, and were barely warmed at the fires before they were eaten. The head was then cut off, and carefully placed on one side, on a leaf. Meanwhile the old butcher, with his feeble voice and toothless gums, was delivering a lecture on the man he was cutting up. He spoke of him as a warrior, who had performed great deeds, which he enumerated; rejoiced in the fact that his wife and family would be left to starve, and in fact in many ways showed himself to be a thorough old brute.

It would serve no good purpose to describe minutely the rest of the proceedings. It is enough to say that all six bodies were cut up into very small pieces. Each piece was carefully wrapped in a stout leaf, and was bound up tightly with sinnet. The thigh and shin bones were preserved intact. They are used for making handles to spears. These spears are not meant

for fighting, but are profusely ornamented, and are usually kept in the houses devoted to their carved images. When all six bodies had been cut up, the pile of little parcels wrapped in green leaves had assumed considerable dimensions.

Now came Nanati's turn. He had to portion out the whole, according to strict laws of precedence, and no doubt he acquitted himself to every one's satisfaction.

The ovens were opened: the flesh divided into as many parts as there were ovens; a little pile was put into each oven, and then covered up with hot stones. The bones, and other *débris* which were not wanted, were wrapped in mats and carried into the bush to be buried; and the only things left were what I should perhaps have been most glad to see disposed of—namely, the six heads.

These were still arranged in a row on a mat, and it remained to be seen what would be done with them. Nanati could evidently dispose of them as he wished; in fact, I believe most of them belonged to him by right of conquest, so energetic had he been in the fight. He asked me if I had any wishes concerning them, but I assured him that I was by no means anxious to have any share in them.

They were then disposed of in various ways, and when I asked what would be done with them, I was told, "They will go to improve the sak-sak." The natives on the east coast of New Ireland prepare a

very excellent composition of sago and cocoa-nut, called sak-sak. I used to buy a supply of this every morning, as it would not keep, for my men. Now it appeared that for the next week or so, a third ingredient would be added to the sak-sak, namely, brains. I need hardly say that for the next two days of my stay I did not taste sak-sak, though my men made no secret of doing so.

The flesh in the ovens had to be cooked for three days, or till the tough leaves in which it was wrapped were nearly consumed. When taken out of the ovens the method of eating is as follows. The head of the eater is thrown back, somewhat after the fashion of an Italian eating macaroni. The leaf is opened at one end, and the contents are pressed into the mouth till they are finished. As Bill, my interpreter put it, "they cookum that fellow three day; by-and-by cookum finish, that fellow all same grease."

For days afterwards, when everything is finished, they abstain from washing, lest the memory of the feast should be too fleeting.

After seeing this performance through from beginning to end, I thought it high time to be off. Nanati was anxious for me to stay longer, but I had taken somewhat of a dislike to my friend the chief. We parted, however, on the best terms, and the whole tribe saw us off, with much noise and shouting.

Though I had mixed much among cannibals before I had never actually seen any cannibalism.

As a rule, in New Britain for instance, and the Solomon Islands, though they are undoubted cannibals in both places, they will usually deny it, and say, "We are not cannibals, but such and such a tribe is."

In Fiji, many years ago, where the natives were much addicted to cannibalism, there was always a superstitious feeling attached to the practice. Human flesh was not looked upon merely as food, but it was supposed that by eating a portion of a noted warrior, his qualities of bravery, fleetness of foot, etc., were thus transferred to the man who helped to eat him. The flesh, too, was never touched with the fingers, but invariably with forks made for the purpose.

In the Solomons there are only certain families who are allowed to touch human flesh; and no young man, unless he had greatly distinguished himself, would eat it.

In the New Hebrides it is usually dried in the sun, or "jerked," and then it seems to be looked on more as an article of food than in most places.

But in New Ireland, human flesh was eaten in the most open matter-of-course way, by young and old, women and children, and it was spoken of as delicious food, far superior to pork.

In none of the former places which I have mentioned would a stranger have been permitted to witness the cannibal orgies; but in New Ireland they seemed to

be proud to show me how they killed their enemies first, and ate them afterwards. I was, of course, very careful to let no signs of disgust or disapprobation escape me; and, perhaps, as I was the first Englishman to land amongst them, they thought that I was accustomed to the same sort of thing in the white man's country.

Looking back on the whole adventure now, I regard it as one of the most curious and interesting which has befallen me, since I have been in the Western Pacific; but I can honestly say that I should not care to go through it again.

Nevertheless, I now consider it a great piece of good fortune, though I did not think it such at the time, to have been an eyewitness of a great native battle, and of the events which followed it. As to these latter,—I believe there is no "old hand," or "beach comber," who has ever seen cannibalism in its perfection, as I did on that occasion.

When I was in England in 1881, hardly any one would believe in the very existence of cannibalism in the present day. At that time, though I had never seen it, I knew well that it did exist. There are even men in the Pacific who deny its existence on the ground that they have never seen it, asserting that they have seen every native custom, and that they must have seen that also, if it existed.

We must remember that, except in New Ireland, which is a veritable *terra incognita,* there is nothing

as to which natives are so reticent, or the practice of which they will deny so readily, as cannibalism.

At present the cannibals in the world may be numbered by millions. Probably a third of the natives of the country where I am now writing (New Guinea) are cannibals; so are about two-thirds of the occupants of the New Hebrides, and the same proportion of the Solomon Islanders. All the natives of the Santa Cruz Group, Admiralties, Hermits, Louisiade, Engineer, D'Entrecasteaux groups are cannibals; and even some well-authenticated cases have occurred among the "black fellows" of Northern Australia.

I do not know that the fact of a native being a cannibal makes him a greater savage. Some of the most treacherous savages on this coast are undoubtedly not cannibals, while most of the Louisiade cannibals are a mild-tempered pleasant set of men.

In conclusion, I venture to hope that I may have described what I saw in a fairly inoffensive manner, though the subject is one which requires delicate handling. A perfectly full as well as faithful description would be impossible, in the interests of modesty and good taste.

While the events above described were still fresh in my memory, I wrote an account of them for publication; but the manuscript either got lost in the post, or was mislaid.

I believe Captain S—— and I are the only two

white men in the Pacific who have ever witnessed either a large native battle or a cannibal feast. Both are of the greatest interest to look back upon; but whatever adventures may be in store for me in the future in the Pacific, I must say I sincerely hope that I may be spared another cannibal banquet.

CHAPTER IV.

SOLOMON ISLANDS.

A GOOD deal is known superficially, very little intimately, about the Solomon Islands. If we look in the books of different travellers we get little information about them. There are the usual tales, accounts of attacks, descriptions of the appearance of the natives, pictures of some of their weapons, stories of cannibalism (of which, however, so far as I know, there has been no eyewitness in the Solomons with the exception of an Italian whom I have mentioned elsewhere), and much more of such matter, correct and incorrect. The gentlemen most familiar with the languages and modes of life of the Solomon Islanders would undoubtedly be the members of the Melanesian Mission. But even these gentlemen could tell us but little of the northern islands, Buka and Bougainville, the latter of which is the largest in the group; while the accounts that have reached us of the manners and customs of the natives of Buka sound almost like fairy tales.

I grant that it is extremely difficult to obtain any information, as the ordinary white man finds much difficulty in landing at most places, and out of the enormous number of coast natives who have been taken away, but few can talk about their people whilst living amongst foreigners. However, their white masters do not, as a rule, exhibit much interest in the details of their former life.

It is almost certain that, however anxious a coast native might be to give information about his bush neighbours, he would be able to do so only in a most imperfect manner. About his immediate neighbours who live some ten or twelve miles inland he might know a good deal. But of the true bush tribes who have come down to the sea, and who live in the very interior of these large islands amongst the mountain ranges, I believe that nothing is known.

There was indeed one ill-fated Englishman who was supposed to have been handed over to bush tribes some thirty years ago. He was a man well-known in England, Mr. Benjamin Boyd, a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. He went, in the year 1854 (I think), to the Solomons in his yacht, *The Wanderer*. At Guadalcanar, one of the largest of the group, he was captured by the natives, though, as the official report of Captain Denham, of H.M.S. *Herald*, says, not killed. Nothing is known of the manner of his death, or even whether he was killed by the natives. Many traces of him were found by Captain Denham, such as initials

carved on trees; and every means of communicating with him which could be thought of were employed. All the trade goods distributed to the natives were marked "B. B.—We are looking for you;" but unfortunately there was no result. But some time ago I was informed, by the captain of a labour schooner, that in a village on the south coast he had observed a European's skull with many others round one of the tambu (or taboo) houses. He knew it to be a European skull from its great size, and, on being allowed to examine it, he found a tooth stopped with gold. It had been there many years, and had been taken from a bush tribe; and so, though there is no sort of evidence beyond this, it is not by any means impossible that this was the skull of Benjamin Boyd.

In those days it is almost certain that the natives were not so hostile to the white men as they have now become. Nowadays, except in some few places, a white man landing almost alone to shoot, would stand a very poor chance; but thirty years ago, after he had been taken prisoner, unless the sorcerers had so ordered it, there would have been no reason why he should be killed.

The civilizing process which the Solomon Islanders have received at the hands of white men since that time has made terrible savages of them.

Of course this remark will be received with great indignation in many quarters, but to all such cavillers I have only to say, "Go there, and see for yourselves."

The amusing part of it is, that these fireside critics say it *ought* not to be so; and there they are right. But they discuss the question among themselves in their studies in Australia, and no doubt, in such comfortable quarters, they delude themselves into the belief that what ought to be *is*. The proper place for such a discussion is the beach at Bougainville; and I cannot help thinking that, even to the most obstinate of these critics, arguments would be forthcoming which would convince him, in a few minutes, or even less, that his contentions were untenable. Let it not be said, however, that contact with white men has taught the Solomon Islander nothing. He has learned to swear in a truly marvellous manner. It is generally supposed that the English language is not rich in expletives, and that the only complete safety-valve to the feelings is to be found in German. An angry German is, doubtless, very terrible; but I will back one or two Solomon Island gentlemen, whom I could name, to garnish their discourse in a manner no German could approach.

This is an insignificant matter, however, compared with the introduction of European diseases. Though newly recruited labourers are examined by a medical man on their arrival in British territory, they are permitted to go back without such examination, to sow the seeds of diseases hitherto unknown among their respective tribes. I have no intention whatever of in any way discussing the present system of labour trade, as it is a subject totally out of place here. But these

men who return in this condition do not help to place the native opinion of the white man on a very high pedestal.

It is well known with what rapidity a disease from which they have hitherto been exempt runs through a native race. The epidemic of measles in Fiji, from which some forty thousand natives died, is one memorable case.

In New Guinea many thousands died of small-pox. In many parts of the Solomon Islands the natives have to thank the white man for a no less fatal disease. In one tribe in Bougainville, every infected man, woman, and child was destroyed—a severe measure, but surely a sensible one, though one which could only be practised by a savage race. In most parts of the Solomon Islands this introduction of disease has produced a feeling of bitter hatred against white men. To the native mind it appears a premeditated plot to destroy them. Is it, then, to be expected that they should welcome white men to their shores?

Our system of quarantine in the colonial ports is the result of precisely the same mode of reasoning; and should our quarantine laws be broken, we should have recourse to the same measures as those adopted in the Solomons: that is to say, we should certainly fire on any people we saw attempting to land from an infected ship. To the Solomon Islander all white men are infected. The plain language in which this fact has been impressed on me by many natives cannot

be reproduced here. It can be imagined, and must be taken for granted. A Solomon Islander, savage though he be, is not entirely an animal. He has sufficient intelligence to feel that his confidence has been betrayed. He has sufficient reasoning power to perceive the remedy. Who can blame him for carrying out that remedy to the utmost? Assuredly no disinterested person who has made a study of his case.

But to the interested person, who requires an animal who can perform so many hours' work a day, what form of argument can be used? What can convince such an one that his own presence is obnoxious to these animals? If they throw spears at him before his boat has touched the beach, they are fired on, and perhaps some are killed. Then follow the usual outcries of treacherous attacks; revenge of every description is suggested in the papers, and the most decided objection made to having the case investigated before reprisals are taken.

Like all native races of the present day, the population of the Solomons is decreasing rapidly. Nor can this be ascribed entirely to the unfortunate results of intercourse with white men. There are several places where it is the custom to kill all, or nearly all, of the children soon after they are born. This habit prevails principally in the north of the group; but there are, I believe, some places in the south where it also exists. I have not the slightest idea what is the reason for the existence of the custom. It becomes necessary to buy

other children from other tribes, and very good care is taken not to buy them too young. This gives rise to a strange state of things, as the women are constantly to be seen suckling young pigs and dogs. This sounds very disgusting, but I suppose something of the sort must be done if they destroy their babies. I have seen the same thing in other groups in case of the death of a child, and I have also seen strong children of four or five years old being suckled.

There are several other customs which also tend to diminish the race. In a battle the victorious party, if they can surprise their enemies sufficiently to admit of a wholesale massacre, kill not only the men, but also all the women and children. "We should be fools," say they, "if we did not. This must be revenged some day, if there are any men to do it; but how can they get men if we kill the women and children?"

Fortunately the native battles are not usually so disastrous, for it is as difficult to surprise a native camp as it proverbially is to catch a weasel asleep. But if one of the enemy's women can be surprised and cut off in the bush, she is killed, and then there will be one or perhaps two men less in the future to fight against.

In most places bastard children are killed immediately they are born, and perhaps the mother also. Supposing the sexes to be pretty equally divided, the system which obtains, of one man who can afford it having several wives, precludes the possibility of many

young men getting married at all. In some places in the north of the Solomon Group, I have been told that they expose their children as the Spartans did of old, and this practice would doubtless kill off a good many. In addition to this, a woman seldom has more than two children, and should she ever have twins, for some inexplicable reason she would be much ashamed of herself, and the twins would be killed.

In all these circumstances it is not much to be wondered at that the native race should be decreasing. Had the rate of mortality not been so enormously increased by the introduction of European diseases, it might still be preserving its proper balance, as it doubtless has done for thousands of years past, and that in spite of the labour trade and such-like institutions. Perhaps it is because the native children are not liable to contract the various infantile diseases from which European children die, that this balance has been preserved so long in spite of these barbarous habits.

One rule is in force, in the north of the group, which would appear to embrace a very sound principle of political economy. No one is allowed to be a useless member of the community. When a man is too old to work or fight he is no longer of any use, and is not worth the food he consumes, as he imposes additional labour on some more active man. He must therefore die; and this he does, I believe, with great composure and satisfaction to himself and his family. The women are

more often allowed to grow old. I think that the value of an old woman as a "scold" is recognized, and she is certainly of much use sometimes in abusing the young men, and bringing them to a fitting sense of their duties. The old women, too, very often, as in other countries, practise the occult sciences, and become powerful witches or poisoners.

Old women have done me many good turns in many places, and, as I said before, I never neglect making them small presents. If an old woman once calls you "her child," she can be trusted to help you to the extent of her ability, and would give a timely warning were any mischief intended. The men, unfortunately, are not so trustworthy. Presents do not often soften their hearts as they do the hearts of old women, who might be supposed to be beyond the age of gifts.

As one goes north in this group the natives become finer and handsomer men, till at Buka—the most northern island—they are the finest specimens of manhood in the South Seas. They are fine plucky fellows too. If they have to fight they will do so in the open, and not trust to cover as so many natives do. Wherever he goes, and whatever natives he mixes among, a Buka man will always become the leader. Like the Malayta men, they do not care to attack boats or any such small game as that. They will try to take the ship and get possession of everything in her. In two cases that occurred in Malayta, they actually succeeded in doing this. In the case of (I think) the

Janet Stuart, a boat was away recruiting men for the plantations. On its return, the whole of the ship's crew, of mixed whites and natives, was discovered to have been murdered; and so sudden must have been the attack, that the captain and government agent had not even time to rise from the two easy-chairs in which they had been sitting. Both had been tomahawked as they sat. The government agent must have been seized by his beard, as his jaw was dislocated. From the positions of the bodies there seems to have been no resistance, so suddenly must the scheme have been executed. Every movable thing in the ship had been carried off; the standing rigging was cut to pieces, and all the ropes which could be reached had been taken away. There was no alternative for the men in the boat but to make for the small island of Ugi, where a white trader was living, and to abandon the ship.

Another ship, whose name I have forgotten, was captured under very similar circumstances at the same place.

But the Buka men are even more daring than those of Malayta. The mate of a big full-rigged ship from China to Sydney told me that on one occasion, after a week of calms, they drifted out of their course to within a mile of Buka. The ship was far larger than anything the natives had seen before, but they mustered in their full force, and came out in thousands to try and take her. The only weapon on board was a small

rusty revolver and five cartridges. This was fired at them without producing any effect. But the captain seems to have been a man of resources, and the ship's sides were high. He accordingly boiled as much water as he possibly could, and whenever a canoe came within range it received the contents of a can of boiling water. As soon as the natives perceived that there were no fire-arms in the ship, they fell back out of boiling-water range, and began to fire arrows which did no damage. They were waiting for the heavy swell to set the ship on the reef, after which they would have had her at their mercy. Providentially, however, a light south-east breeze came up before that happened, and the ship was able to haul off the shore, hotly pursued by the canoes for several miles.

Many of the tribes are, like the Dyaks and several other races, professed head-hunters. This is a very unpleasant occupation, so far as the stranger in the country is concerned. It is supposed that the unfortunate murder of Lieutenant Bower and his boat's crew, some years ago, was in some measure owing to this habit.

The story was probably read by every one at the time, so it is useless to repeat it here. It seems that the fact was that a certain chief called Kalicona was sick, and that his people were afraid of him, as, like Saul, he threw spears at them when they approached him. Thinking that some white men's heads would appease him, they organized the expedition against

Lieutenant Bower and his boat's crew, who were at the time on shore surveying. All were killed with the exception of one man named Savage, who escaped by swimming. His swim must have been an adventurous one, for he relates how he was accompanied for a great part of the way by a large shark, who circled round and round him, and actually rubbed against his side several times.

While on the subject of swimming with sharks, I may mention that there is a well-authenticated story of two Fijian natives, a man and his wife, who swam for forty miles accompanied at times by sharks. The sharks tore the sulus, or linen waist-cloths, off them, but did no further damage. They actually slept by turns in the water, one supported by the other,—the wife, who was the better swimmer of the two, supporting her husband the last mile to the beach. This story is well known to many people in Fiji.

But to return to head-hunters. It is difficult to distinguish between the natives who will kill you solely for the sake of your head, and those who will preserve your head after you have been killed for some other purpose. I believe the number of the former class are few, but that some do exist in Bougainville is pretty certain.

Most natives are fond of keeping the skulls of the animals they have eaten. Pigs, dogs, dugongs, and alligators' skulls are met with in almost every village, and the cannibal tribes are equally fond of preserving

human skulls. Sometimes they preserve the entire head, and sometimes they make hideous objects of them with clay and lime; but as a rule the plain skull is preserved, and, after some little time, is exhibited with the others round the tambu house.

But it by no means follows that because a tribe exhibits skulls round the houses therefore it is a tribe of head-hunters. The skulls are trophies of prowess, but in a few places they are readily parted with by their owners in exchange for tomahawks or tobacco. The head-hunter *pur et simple* would not do this. He attaches a strong superstitious value to the skulls he has collected, and would part with them for no consideration. I believe there are but few of these people on the coast. What there may be in the bush we do not know, but rumour says that they are very fond of a head there. A white man's head must undoubtedly be considered the gem of the collection, and though it may be pleasant in more civilized regions to be looked upon as a man of note, yet in the Solomon Islands it may entail unpleasant consequences. Even the notoriety acquired by having one's head exhibited on Temple Bar would hardly compensate its former owner for the loss of it, much less for the distinction of having it stuck up in a tambu house for the amusement of a Solomon Island crowd.

In New Guinea there are head-hunters, and a very curious people they are. They look on their profession as the sole object of their lives, do not tattoo themselves,

and indulge in many practices unknown to other natives.

It is very much the fashion to talk of all Solomon Islanders as "head-hunters," because they preserve skulls. The real head-hunter, who devotes himself to his profession with an energy worthy of a better cause, is, to use a vulgar expression, as different as chalk from cheese from the generality of them.

The sorcerer is a great man among the natives of this group. Whether he is a sincere sorcerer or not—that is to say, whether he has faith in himself—I do not know. He drives a thriving trade, and has immense influence over the minds of his fellow-citizens. Like the oracle of Dodona, his predictions are very vague; and whatever happens, the sorcerer can, with a little explanation, prove himself justified in his prediction. His chief work is to mould the elements to his will—to compel a heavy rainfall when the yams require rain, and, when enough rain has fallen, to make the sun appear again, as if by magic, at his bidding.

It is probable that he really does understand the signs of the weather more accurately than others, and that he is guided by his superior knowledge in this respect as to the prophecy which is required of him. One of the sorcerer of my acquaintance was a most interesting study. If he was asked for fine weather (which, by the way, in the Solomons is the usual request, the rainfall being enormous), he used to temporize in a truly masterly manner. First he would hold out for more

payment. This policy he could continue for an indefinite length of time, as he would of course require payment in a form which he knew was difficult or impossible for the natives to comply with. Then, if he thought there was any likelihood of fine weather for a day or two, he would become possessed of a devil, which would leave him at once if the sun made its appearance, but while the bad weather lasted the devil would last too; and finally, if the fine weather was very obstinate and would not come, he would hold out again for more payment. In this manner my old sorcerer was very seldom mistaken in his forecasts, and the influence he exerted over the clerk of the weather must have been most irksome to that functionary. Rain was more easy to produce, for, in Malayta for instance, but few days out of the 365 pass without a shower.

But his duties did not end here. He used to bury fragments of food, make wooden images, occasionally poison food, and do many other things to distress and annoy the enemies of his clients. He became my sworn brother, however, and credited me with higher powers of sorcery than he himself possessed, because I performed for his edification the simple feat of palming three half-crowns, and producing one from his left ear, another from his hair, and one from his foot. I have found this trick of much account in many places. If I had had the means of producing a rabbit, a cannon ball, and about a thousand yards of paper from my

mouth, I believe I should have been made king of the country. As it was, we practised sorcery together, and though I don't think he learned much from me, I learned an immense deal from him. There is no doubt that a skilful sorcerer can do, or appear to do, pretty nearly anything he chooses. His hold upon the imagination of his dupes is very strong. He skilfully uses such knowledge as he may have acquired from his father before him, and, if not quite infallible, at all events he can appear so to his simple *clientèle.* The art is usually hereditary, and remains in one family; and doubtless there are many poisonous concoctions which the sorcerer knows how to make, and which are secrets of the trade.

By the way, I have forgotten to mention one immense source of profit to the sorcerer. This is the sale of charms. These charms cost him very little to manufacture, but the price paid for them is great. They are made of the commonest materials—crab-shells, nuts, berries, small pieces of wood covered with sinnet—and in innumerable fancy patterns. It is very seldom that any two are made alike. There are charms for making yams grow, some (very expensive) for insuring safety in warfare, some for protection from sharks, from spirits at night, and (most expensive of all) a charm which will give you the affections *pro tem.* of any lady on whom you may have set your heart. This last is a curious charm, and of curious manufacture, though into that we will not

inquire. Whatever efficacy the others may possess, this one is all powerful—of that there is no doubt. It is sufficient to display this mystic symbol on meeting the object of your affections, and she is compelled, by a will stronger than her own, to return your regard in spite of betrothals to others, and the rage of parents and big brothers. What a price it would command in England! But it is to be feared that, once out of the Solomons, it would lose its power. The lady, who no doubt imagines that it is useless to contend against fate and the sorcerer, gives in without a struggle.

But the sorcerer is not fond of selling these charms, in spite of the high price they command. There have been cases where his holy nature has proved insufficient to protect him against retribution; and in the inmost depths of his heart he probably realizes the fact that he is only mortal. But the charms are sold for all that, and are the cause of many grave family scandals.

I have often wondered what the sorcerer thinks of himself; whether he really believes himself to be a magician, or whether he realizes the fact that he is an arrant old humbug. I think there is a mixture of both feelings.

In the matter of rain-producing, etc., the seasons are very regular in the Pacific, and a good weather prophet may find honour even in his own country. In his weather forecasts he is probably sincere, and possibly confounds the power of foretelling fine weather or rain

with the power of producing them at will. But I fear that his yam-producing charm-making attributes cannot be defended, and that in those respects he must feel that he is rather trading on the credulity of the public. He is fortunate in having good material to work on, and if he is a clever old sorcerer he makes the most of his opportunities. Unsuccessful wizards not unfrequently get clubbed, and are therefore very cautious in their proceedings.

At the very moment that I am writing this, there is an old conjurer about a hundred yards off, making night hideous with his appeals to the various spirits of darkness not to molest us during the night. He is getting very much excited, so I have just sent him a stick of tobacco to be quiet. We will take our chance of spirits for to-night. But he has "hedged" himself in a clever manner, which is an illustration of the method of sorcerers generally. There are four bushmen in the town to-night, and he has been abusing them in a truly terrible manner. In case any one should die during the night the blame will be laid on the bushmen, and their spirits, over whom he has no control, will be responsible. "What do you come here for with your mountain spirits?" he says. "Don't you know there are foreigners here to-night, who don't mind spirits? Go back, go back!" and so on, *crescendo*, till no doubt the stick of tobacco explains his sudden silence. But the old man is safe for to-night. The bush natives have listened with utter indifference. But should any

one die during the night, or should any houses be burnt by accident—not an uncommon occurrence, these bush natives will, if they get a chance of escaping, be far away to-morrow, and all blame will rest with them. The old sorcerer will say he foresaw trouble, and his words of to-night will be remembered. Not improbably, if the bush natives had not been here, he would have appealed to the spirits of the foreigners, and we should have to pay heavily to-morrow to avoid trouble. I make a point of cultivating the acquaintance of these gentlemen, for their conversation is most entertaining.

Though it is not generally supposed to be the case, yet it is the fact that the natives of the Solomon Islands are much impressed by any real display of firmness and vigour. The murderers of Lieutenant Bower, when being punished, were immensely impressed, not so much by the execution of three men as by the fact that it was considered necessary to execute the men who had actually committed the crime. The practice to which these savages are accustomed is that of a life for a life, or, more frequently, several innocent lives for one. The idea of punishment being employed as a deterrent, and not from motives of revenge, had never, I think, before this occurred to them.

In the cases which call for punishment the difficulties in the way of capturing the actual culprits are greater than any one, who has not been engaged in this disagreeable work, can imagine.

But in the ordinary intercourse which takes place

between natives and white men it is often necessary to take a very firm stand with them. They will try cajolery, sulkiness, sarcasm, and finally rage, and then give in suddenly and accede to your terms. It is only the start amongst them which is difficult; that accomplished, the rest is easy.

One of the most disagreeable experiences one has to go through in the course of intimate intercourse with Solomon Islanders arises from the fact that most of them suffer more or less from skin diseases. It is only a prejudice after all, but it is unpleasant to be under the necessity of constantly carrying sulphur ointment about with one. They say themselves that their skin diseases are caused by a little worm which inhabits a palm-tree, but whether this is so I must leave to the doctors to decide. The little worm, however, is as fond of white men as he is of natives, and it is much to be regretted that life in his palm-tree should not be sufficiently varied to offer him inducements to remain there.

The two traders with whom I am acquainted in the Solomons seem to lead a peaceful existence. With a plurality of wives, life, even in the Solomons, may, I suppose, be borne with equanimity.

On the occasion of my visit to them, the floor of the house was covered with infants of all ages and every shade of colour. Matrimony had been a success, one could see. There is no Mrs. Grundy as yet to raise her voice against what Artemus Ward calls "being as much married as one pleases." Courtship

is a matter of beads and tomahawks, and those in no very ruinous quantities.

Near the traders' establishment there were living, at the time of my visit, some native teachers of the Melanesian Mission, a short account of which will be found in another chapter.

White men seem to acquire many of the habits of the natives after a short residence among them. One of these is the practice of betel-nut chewing, which, while it disfigures a native quite sufficiently, gives a white man a truly horrible appearance. It preserves while it disfigures the teeth, and that is the only good I have ever heard of it.

At Ugi, a small island in the south of the Solomon Group, there is a remarkable illustration of the fact that natives may possess a sense of humour and sarcasm, the truth of which has been widely denied. Coarse fun—so say the general public—they can appreciate, but not humour. But in Ugi, at a village called Ete-Ete, there is a carving some ten feet high, of an Englishman dressed in a pair of red and white striped trousers, blue shirt and chimney-pot hat. By him stands a native boy pointing to a pigeon, which is seated in a most conspicuous position on the boy's head. The Englishman, who has a gun, is pointing it in precisely the opposite direction, while his head is turned away as if he were afraid of firing it at all. This is evidently meant as "chaff" against the white men who go out shooting. The young native guides

who accompany them have eyes like hawks, and are accustomed from infancy to the bush. They can see a pigeon in an instant, through the thickest scrub; but the Englishman's first glimpse of him is when he is flying off. Hence the sarcasm, which I consider pretty fair for a native.

At Ugi, some years ago, I helped to plant a kitchen garden, as it was intended to make a head-quarters at that place for H.M.'s ships in the Solomons. But alas for our efforts! Although I nearly got sunstroke several times while employed in this work, on my last visit there no sign of it was visible. The natives —small blame to them—had probably appropriated any beans or peas which may have made their appearance.

Not far from Ugi, on the main land of San Christoval, lives a celebrated old chief, Takki by name. He amused me a good deal once, on a fishing expedition, by sitting on the weather gunwale of the canoe, and using the most terrible language to the waves. Horrible things were going to happen, should a wave have sufficient temerity to wet me in the slightest degree. Unlike those of Canute, though perhaps with the same expectation as to their efficacy, old Takki's exhortations were successful, and though I attributed this extraordinary fact more to skilful steering than to his curses, yet I gave him an extra stick of tobacco for the trouble he had taken.

The natives of San Christoval have a great apprecia-

tion of beauty in flowers. The arrangements of creeping plants in some of their towns show a great deal of skill. Old Takki's town, for instance, was a mass of Bougainvillias, orchids, crotons, etc. Of course, the adornment of the head with pretty and sweet-smelling flowers is universal all over the Pacific. I think that the hibiscus is the favourite plant.

A very amusing incident happened on the occasion of my first visit to old Takki's town. The ship was anchored at Ugi, and it was not a very long run in the steam-cutter across to San Christoval, where Takki lived. Our party consisted of some of the officers from the ship, and, among others, the doctor. If Doctor H—— ever sees this, I tender him my sincere apologies for telling this story, but I don't think he will mind much. The doctor, unfortunately for himself, had a complete set of false teeth, which came out and slipped in their places again, at the most unexpected moments. After the manner of artificial teeth, they would occasionally appear on his plate at dinner; but as he had no false pride about them he did not much care. After my business at Wano was finished and it was time to go back to the boat, one of the party said, "Doctor, why not take out your teeth and show them to the natives?" No sooner said than done. A tin pannikin was produced full of water. We made a halt, and several hundred natives surrounded us. We pointed to the doctor who assumed a diabolical grin, the like of which we should not have

supposed possible on his genial countenance, and which frightened us as much as it did the natives. Then suddenly, with a dexterous twist, out came his teeth, top and bottom, and were deposited in the tin mug. Such a yell of astonishment I never heard. The poor man had to stand with his mouth open, so that they might satisfy themselves that the teeth were really gone. Old Takki, who was calmer than most under the circumstances, said, "I am an old man, but I thank God that I have lived to see this day." He said the fame of this exploit would travel the length and breadth of San Christoval next day. Indeed, I found it had not been forgotten three years later, when I revisited the town.

On our way back the doctor was pensive, and seemed to be given up to melancholy thoughts. When asked what was the matter, he replied, "I don't think I astonished the natives enough; if I had had a wig, and a glass eye, and perhaps a cork leg, I think I really might have surprised them." We reassured him on this point, and I doubt not that the doctor's false teeth are spoken of to this day.

One more story about the Solomons may illustrate the somewhat peculiar condition of white society there at the time of my first visit. One of the traders, a certain Mr. B——, had a wife who lived on a small island some sixty miles from Ugi. Mrs. B—— was the leader of fashion in the group, and, as I was told, was very particular about outward forms of respect.

One day a three-masted schooner came into the anchorage, and the captain, as we supposed him to be, came on board to report himself. He turned out to be the mate, however, and when I asked him where the captain was, he said, "Well, you see, the captain he went ashore last night to see Mrs. B——, and while he was ashore a squall comes on, and we parts our cables and drifts to sea."

"Yes," said I, "and what then?"

"Well," he said, "I'm a little bit anxious about the captain, you see, 'cause I knows he hadn't got only one pair of trousers, you see, and after we made sail I found 'em in his cabin."

"But," we remarked, "he was paying a visit to Mrs. B——."

"Oh! *she* ain't no account," said the mate; "she *likes* gentlemen to call on her free and easy like. I was thinking as you gentlemen mightn't like to see the skipper in that rig, and our skipper I knows as he wouldn't like it himself."

Modest skipper! and free and easy Mrs. B——! My ideas of the outward respect necessary in approaching that lady came down many degrees. Alas! I never made her acquaintance, but had I done so I fear she might have thought me haughty, and prone to standing too much on ceremony, as I certainly should not have gone in "that rig" to see her. The captain did turn up the same day in a boat, but the free-and-easy one's husband must have supplied his

deficiencies, for he had on a striped calico nether garment.

I was consulted later, by the husband, as to the possibility of purchasing an English peerage. He had saved "a good bit of money," he said, "and his wife would like it." He proposed to take his title from the name of his estates in the Solomons,—to which, by the way, he had no sort of right,—and to settle down in Australia, where his intention was to "swell it with the best of them." It went to my heart to tell him that the free-and-easy one could never become an ornament to our peerage, but I recommended America as the country of cheap distinctions, and told him that he would probably only have to sign a few papers to enable him to assume the title of Colonel. He might even dispense with the journey altogether, as I felt convinced that he might call himself anything he pleased in the Solomons without offending any one.

It is not of Ugi and San Christoval, however, that I wish to write, for the natives are not seen in their wild state in those islands, where they have had a considerable amount of intercourse with white men. The little trade which does go on is chiefly in cocoa-nuts in the form of copra. It is such a rainy country that the copra cannot be dried in the sun as in other places, but has to be smoked, which detracts largely from its value.

It is strange to me that so few people visit the Solomon Islands except for business purposes. Yachts-

men could enjoy themselves there to any extent, and as they are in the very heart of the south-east trade-wind, calculations can be made with almost as great exactness in a sailing ship as in a steamer. Mr. Boyd set the example thirty years ago, and fifteen years ago Lord Pembroke followed suit in the Pacific. Lord Pembroke, however, did not, I think, visit the Solomons, and so he missed seeing the most beautiful and extraordinary group of islands in the Pacific—perhaps in the world. Mr. Boyd's fate, which I have mentioned before, is certainly no inducement to follow his example, but he seems to have been very rash, even in those days, in assuming that he could land and see the country without any preliminary arrangements with the natives.

The scenery throughout the Solomon Islands is magnificent. Bougainville is perhaps the finest of them. The most objectionable feature is the climate. That certainly is a drawback, as it is constantly raining, and there is a good deal of fever on shore. In that respect, however, the Solomons are not so bad as New Guinea, where doubtless many curious travellers will soon be going.

An amateur traveller, if he goes in a yacht, could, in the most luxurious manner, and without a single hardship to endure, see life here as thoroughly savage as any in the world, and if he be of an adventurous turn of mind he might perhaps penetrate a short distance into the bush, and add to our scanty

information concerning the natives who live there. He might certainly add to our knowledge of the reefs and shoals which there are about. The group is being surveyed by degrees, but it is a work which will take years. The charts are still in a very incomplete state. Not only do they omit many reefs which exist, but they mark many which do not exist, and this makes navigation there a work of some danger.

However, this would all be pleasant excitement to the yachtsmen, and I strongly advise some of them to give it a trial. Send the yacht out at the beginning of the year, and leave England towards the end of the London season, arriving in Australia at the end of August. That would give four months cruising before the commencement of the hurricane season. The next two months could be spent in many agreeable places, and the traveller could be home again by May, if he wished it.

Owing to the dangers and difficulties in the way, the natural history of the northern Solomon Islands is but little known. I verily believe that the Spaniards knew as much about them at the time of their discovery as we do now.

In the last few years something has been done in the southern islands. Collectors of all sorts have been there, and the plants, birds, fishes, etc., are pretty well known.

Should I ever have the opportunity and time to do

so, I firmly intend to accept the many invitations I have received from Bougainville and Buka men, to pay their country a long visit, instead of the very short ones with which, up to the present time, I have been obliged to be content.

CHAPTER V.

POISONED ARROWS.

In September of 1883, a commission was appointed by M. Pallu de la Barrière, then governor of New Caledonia, to inquire into the nature of the arrows, commonly reported poisoned, so much in use among the natives of the surrounding islands.

The report of this commission is very valuable, as it completely dispels the vulgar notion of the fatal nature of these weapons; and also conclusively proves that, when death has resulted from tetanus, that unfortunate complication proceeded from natural causes, such as climate, nervous apprehension of fatal results, and the little point of bone which must almost certainly remain in the wound. The report quotes many instances, some of which I will mention, of the effects of these wounds, and also gives a detailed account of some of the experiments that were then made.

The amount of material which the commission had to work upon was somewhat small, as it seems they could only procure some fifty arrows, a few of which were un-

doubtedly not poisoned. The conclusions arrived at by the commission are only what were to be expected. It has long been known to me, and to many other men in the Pacific who have studied the question, that the so-called poison was, if not exactly a harmless composition, certainly not a deadly one. Of course ninety per cent. of the white men trading in the Pacific believe, and will continue to believe, in the fatal effects of poisoned arrows. It would be perhaps more exact to say, the fatal effects of the poison on the arrows; as the arrows themselves have, of course, often inflicted fatal wounds, as any other arrow would have done. These traders ask, "Why are the natives themselves so afraid of them? Why do they keep the points so carefully covered?" These questions will be answered later on. It is enough to say, at present, that the native is undoubtedly afraid of his own arrows, but solely on account of the spells which have been cast over them—first by the poisoner who prepares them for him, and secondly by the sorcerer, who drives an even more thriving trade than the poisoner.

Though I agree completely with everything that is said in this report, still it is only fair to say that the commission have lost sight of one important point, which renders their experiments on dogs, etc., not so valuable as they would otherwise have been.

The report states that no results are obtained on the lower animals, by wounding them with these arrows, or by injecting the poison beneath the skin. The members of the commission were probably not aware of the fact

that, whatever properties the poison may possess—and that it is injurious to a small degree is probable,—those properties very soon disappear by exposing the arrow to the air. The poison is constantly renewed, as I have myself seen; and, indeed, the arrows are not poisoned at all till they are required for use. This rather detracts from the satisfaction which we might otherwise derive from the want of results observed in New Caledonia, Melbourne, and Sydney. In the case of a dog which exhibited slight symptoms of paralysis of the hind quarters after the poison of four arrows had been introduced under the skin, it is possible that one freshly poisoned arrow might have produced more violent results. However, as I said before, the natives depend on their sorcerers to make their arrows deadly, and they depend on them also to be cured of any wounds of a poisonous nature which they may receive.

M. le Docteur Brassac, chef du Service de Santé, the president of the commission, is a scientific man of great ability. Some excellent rules and methods of treatment are laid down in the case of wounds from poisoned arrows; but till the present erroneous impression concerning them is dispelled, it is to be feared that deaths from tetanus will be frequent.

I quote a paragraph of a letter of M. Brassac to M. Pallu de la Barrière:—

"Nearly every instance we have of poisoning by arrows has been a negative one, and only serves to confirm the numerous facts, which prove that the natives

of Oceania have till now been unable to poison their arrows in a manner injurious to human life, and that it is very necessary to doubt the fatal nature of these weapons, on account of the terror caused by a wound from one of them, to the unfortunate patient, and of the tetanus which frequently supervenes."

The report of the commission goes on to say that the arrows in use among the Polynesians differ widely from those in use among the natives of South America and the West Coast of Africa, and that those known among the natives of New Caledonia, Santa Cruz, and the New Hebrides are the least dangerous of any.

I have not got Stanley's book, "Across the Dark Continent," but I remember well that he relates that, on the several occasions on which his party were attacked by natives using poisoned arrows, the wounds which several of them sustained yielded to treatment without any fatal results. In Java and Borneo, where it is supposed that the arrows are poisoned with the sap of the upas-tree, fatal results from tetanus are uncommon.

I propose to deal merely with death from tetanus, caused, as is commonly supposed, by the poison in which the arrow is steeped.

It may be as well, for the benefit of those who have never seen one, to describe the appearance of a poisoned arrow. There is no doubt that, whether they are poisoned or not, a native never carries more than five or six at a time, and that their points are most care-

fully protected by a stout sheath, made of banana-leaf. There may, however, be a reason for this, other than the presence of poison and the fear of an accidental wound. The point of the arrow is so delicate and fragile that it requires protection. It is made of a very fine piece of bone, usually supposed to be human, about the size of an ordinary sewing needle. This is secured to the shaft of the arrow by a very fine twine; and sometimes a few barbs, made either of bone or of the stout thorns of the lemon-tree, are let in for a distance of two inches from the point. More often, however, the arrow is perfectly plain, without barbs. The twine is covered with a bluish gum, while the point of the arrow has some small particles of a black substance adhering to it. It is the fashion to say that this black substance is caused by the arrow having been poisoned by insertion in the decaying flesh of a man for some days dead, but there is no sort of evidence to bear out this theory. In fact, I believe that medical men would deny that such a form of poisoning would produce tetanus. They would say, I believe, that the body of a man recently dead might produce poisonous results, but not that of one who had been dead some days. The poison, if there be any, is probably contained in the sinnet whipping, which secures the point to the shaft. This seems to be covered with some very astringent gum, probably composed of the sap of a strychnine root, mixed with pine-apple juice, and other ingredients, which composition

acts as an irritant on the wound made by the arrow, and may very possibly cause it to become a sore, difficult to heal.

The Santa Cruz arrow, usually considered the most deadly, is very small, being commonly about two feet in length; while the New Hebrides arrows are much heavier, and capable of inflicting a mortal wound on the spot.

In Borneo and Java, small animals and birds exhibit slight signs of tetanus on being struck by a poisoned arrow, but there is nothing to show that a similar result would be produced on a man.

It is almost impossible to be struck by a poisoned arrow without a small piece of the bone point remaining in the wound. In all such cases deep incisions should be made at once, no matter how insignificant the wound may appear, and this portion of bone removed. It is the opinion of nearly every medical man who has studied the subject, that it is to this piece of bone, assisted by the imagination of the wounded man, and the tropical climate, that tetanus is due, and that the supposed poison has little or nothing to do with it.

It is probable that the idea that the poison in the arrow produces tetanus is a recent one. Carteret, more than a hundred years ago, was attacked by the natives of Santa Cruz, but, of the ten men hit, three died from the severe nature of their wounds, while seven recovered, no mention being made of any case of tetanus. If any of his men had died from so remarkable and horrible a

disease as this, Carteret could hardly have failed to mention the fact.

But the most conclusive evidence against the poison theory is afforded by the natives themselves. They fight amongst each other, and are frequently killed and wounded, but they do not, except in rare cases, die of tetanus. They attach a superstitious importance to the human bone with which the arrow is tipped, and rely a great deal on the strength of the man by whom the arrow is shot, but they place chief confidence in the skill and spells employed by their doctors and sorcerers.

The fact that the minds of the natives are fully as much affected by the spells and promises of the sorcerers as they are by the fear of a wound ending fatally, goes a long way to prove that tetanus is partly a disease of the imagination. The sorcerers require heavy payment, but in return they promise complete immunity from danger; and the result is, that white men, who would not believe in such promises, and are unable to look upon their wounds as trifling scratches, die; whereas the natives, whose minds are under complete control, do not.

There is no doubt, however, that the natives do dip their arrows into some compound, which certainly aggravates the wound made by them. The Santa Cruz arrow is too light a weapon to be relied upon for giving a mortal wound. What the nature of the substance is is very doubtful. Most natives are skilled in poisoning, but they devote their attention, as a rule, to substances

which may be mixed with the food, and not to poisons which cause death by mixing with the blood. The euphorbia and the root of a strychnine have been suggested as chief ingredients; but, however anxious a native may be to give information on this point, he is usually unable to do so, as the art of poisoning arrows is confined to a few old men and women in each tribe. This art is hereditary, and handed down from father to son, or mother to daughter, as the case may be, and no inducements would prove strong enough to make them disclose the secret of their trade. Perhaps, like many another trade, its success depends on the atmosphere of mystery by which it is surrounded, and, like many a patent medicine of the present day, the poison would prove to be a simple compound, powerless for good or evil. I did once see a lump of the material used for poisoning arrows in Fiji. How it had been obtained I do not know. In appearance it was very like beeswax, and it was carefully protected by envelopes of banana-leaves. I believe no analysis revealed what its component parts were.

To quote again from the valuable report of the commission:—

"Des voyageurs ont raconté, que les naturels du Pacifique empoisonnent aussi leurs flèches en les implantant, et les laissant séjourner quelque temps, dans des cadavres en décomposition. Ce fait est contesté par plusieurs missionaires, notamment par

Mr. Selwyn, qui a habité longtemps les Archipels des Nouvelles Hébrides, de Banks, et de Santa Cruz.

"Ce qui a pu faire croire à ce fait, c'est qu'à la suite des guerres entre tribus, des cadavres, portant des flèches, ont pu être abandonnés, comme on en trouve du reste souvent, dans les circonstances ordinaires, abandonnés par indifférence. C'est de ces cadavres, réduits à l'état de squelettes, qu'on retire les os, destinés à faire des pointes de flèches; principalement le péroné, et le cubitus.

"Nous dirons du reste, que, dans les effets observés à la suite des blessures, il n'y a rien qui puisse être rattaché à la septicémie, qui produit l'absorption des substances putrides (piqûres anatomiques par exemple)."

If there is any one in the Pacific whose experience can be trusted, it is Bishop Selwyn, alluded to in the above extract. Many men who are not so well known have denied the fact of arrow-points being left to become impregnated with the poisons of decomposing corpses, but he has had more intimate intercourse with the natives of the islands where these arrows are used, and his denial of the fact should be sufficient.

There have been many cases of men dying of tetanus from the wounds of arrows undoubtedly not poisoned. Bishop Patteson thus lost two men in 1867. Whether tetanus was the result of the punctured wounds, and the tropical climate, or the result of a fear that the arrows might be poisoned, I do not know. A cut on the foot from a piece of broken glass, or a wound from

a nail or a knife, might equally produce tetanus. Mr. Codrington (one of the leading men of the Melanesian Mission) says that, on one occasion at Motu, he saw two men wounded by arrows poisoned with the sap of the euphorbia. One of them was very nervous and restless, and died of tetanus; the other, who was probably more influenced by the sorcerers, recovered. Mr. Codrington goes on to say that the natives of the Banks Group and the New Hebrides very commonly die from this cause, following upon the most insignificant injuries.

It would be a satisfaction to me to know whether either of these men had come much under the inflence of the mission. I think it quite possible that a man who had embraced the Christian religion, and as a necessary consequence had ceased to have faith in his sorcerers and such-like gentry, would have nothing in his mind to counterbalance the strong expectation of death produced by a wound from a poisoned arrow. I mean by this that the native's belief in sorcerers is so great, that when he ceases to feel that confidence in them which he formerly did, he must experience a frame of mind to which he was formerly unaccustomed. However, as this is mere speculation, it is useless pursuing the subject further.

Though it is very easy to say—and in my opinion, and in that of most men who have studied the question, there is no doubt of it—that the arrows are not poisoned, still it must require a man of extraordinary

strength of mind to resist the apprehension of tetanus caused by one of these wounds.

One of the most melancholy instances is the well-known one of Commodore Goodenough. Of all men he would have been selected as one to resist this horrible fear. Unfortunately, in those days (1875) no question had ever been raised as to whether a poisoned arrow should of necessity cause death, and it was a generally accepted theory that it did, in spite of instances to the contrary.

There is no need to dwell on the details of this treacherous murder, in which innocent men suffered for the guilt of others, further than to note the fact that, out of the seven men hit, some more severely than the commodore, three died and four recovered. It so happened that on board the *Pearl*, the commodore's ship, there was a blue-jacket who had been formerly on board the *Rosario*. A boat's crew of the *Rosario* had been attacked by natives some time previously, and two men were wounded, one of whom died of tetanus. The blue-jacket, with that consideration so often to be found in people of his class of life, reproduced this anecdote, with every conceivable form of exaggeration, dwelling on the symptoms and horrible death of his former ship-mate. Had it not been for him it is possible that those two young men—neither of them was over eighteen years of age—might not have died. It is said that the commodore had made a study of tetanus, and if that was the case, though he

was as courageous a man as ever lived, it would have been an impossibility for him to prevent his mind dwelling upon what he no doubt considered the probable consequences of his wounds. Tetanus usually makes its appearance after five or six days, that is to say in cases of wounds by arrows. According to the report which I have quoted, no poison which is known to science will produce this result.

The symptoms of death by snake-bite are widely different. In the case of many snake-bites death is accompanied by violent convulsions, and contractions of the muscles. But death comes very rapidly after the injury is inflicted. From ten minutes to twelve hours is the limit in the case of deadly snakes. The death-adder of Australia causes death in a few minutes.

But the death caused by a poisoned arrow is far more terrible than this. For five or six days, while there is no physical pain, the horrible anxiety of mind can only be imagined; but for the two or three days during which the spasms last, till death comes (assuredly as a welcome release), the spectator can judge for himself of the terrible nature of the pain which the unfortunate victim is suffering. While speech is impossible, consciousness is retained. I shall never forget the expression in the eyes of a man whom I once saw die of tetanus.

I think that this is a case where it would be only merciful to destroy a man, when the first symptoms make their appearance. Death is an escape from pain

which we concede to the lower animals, when they meet with accidents from which recovery is impossible, and I feel convinced that any one who had witnessed a death from tetanus produced by the wound of a poisoned arrow would agree with me in my assertion. I do not mean to assert that, with clever doctors, and especially with good nursing, tetanus is of necessity fatal. In the Levuka hospital in Fiji, Dr. McGregor * has made several cures, and much to be congratulated those fortunate individuals were, who came under his care. I remember well, after going round the hospital one day with him, and seeing a case of tetanus, that he disclaimed all credit of any cures he had made, and ascribed them entirely to good nursing. But I feel convinced that should a man be unfortunate enough to be attacked by this horrible disease away from doctor or any chance of recovery, the temptation to blow out his brains in the interval between the spasms would be great.

The experiments which have been made on dogs and birds produce no symptoms of tetanus. They do not even produce death. Dogs wounded with supposed poisoned arrows suffer but little inconvenience.

These experiments, however, are hardly fair criterions. The arrows employed for them in Sydney and Melbourne must of necessity be several weeks old, and it is undoubtedly the case, from what many natives have told me, that the poison in the arrows is

* Now Sir William MacGregor, Administrator of Fiji.

constantly renewed. Before an expected fight the arrows would all be freshly poisoned.

It is quite clear that, whatever the poisonous nature of the substance may be, its noxious qualities are very evanescent; and the experiments which have been made with the arrows in Australia must not be too much relied on as sure tests of its apparently harmless nature.

It is the habit in the Pacific to suppose that any arrow or spear tipped with human bone is poisonous; but there is no reason, that I am aware of, why a human bone should be more injurious than that of a pig.

In these unquiet localities the supply of human bone, for arrow and spear-making purposes, is far greater than that of pig's bone; it seems only natural, therefore, that it should be employed in preference to any other. The human shin and thigh bones are especially valuable in all groups, and are put to a variety of purposes. The ribs are employed sometimes for barbing spears, and especially for making fish-spears.

It is not the habit, so far as I am aware, to allow a dead body to lie on the ground and putrefy. It is always buried; or at all events only such parts as may be required are preserved.

A few more instances of attempted poisoning by arrows will, I think, conclusively prove that the substance with which they are treated is almost innocuous.

M. Brassac says, "It cannot be repeated too often

that a delay in the appearance of the symptoms for several days, or even weeks, precludes all idea of poisoning. It must also be added that, in the case of poisoning by strychnine, the symptoms must not be confounded with those of tetanus. In tetanus the convulsions increase gradually in intensity, and it takes a comparatively long time for them to reach their full strength. In a case of poisoning, on the contrary, especially if it should prove fatal, the spasms make their appearance a few instants after the wound has been inflicted. They are very violent, and their progress is very rapid. Half an hour, twenty minutes, sometimes even less, is sufficient to produce death; while a tetanus which only lasts ten or fifteen hours is considered unusually violent."

The fact that the ancient navigators do not mention it, is sufficient to show that they did not fear the poisoned arrows, and consequently experienced almost complete freedom from tetanus. One Don Lorenzo is said, however, to have died of "spasms," the consequence of a slight wound in the leg, though whether it was caused by an arrow or not we are not told. We are informed that "les naturels de Santa Cruz sont armés d'arcs, et de flèches, dont quelques-unes sont terminées par un os pointu, et enduites d'un poison que les Espagnols ne jugèrent pas très dangereux."

Another traveller says: "Un grand nombre d'exemples recueillis dans les voyages anciens et modernes, permettent de penser qu'il n'y a rien de bien dangereux

dans l'enduit des flèches des sauvages, lequel n'est sans doute qu'un vernis, ayant pour but de protéger la pointe contre les chances de détérioration résultant du climat."

In the many experiments which have been made in various places on dogs, cats, rats, fowls, and frogs, no uneasiness, change of temperature, or loss of appetite was observed, nor any symptoms of poisoning.

An incision was made in a large dog, and the poison from four arrows was placed in the wound, and the edges brought together. A slight uneasiness was the result, and the dog for one day refused to eat. To produce a similar result on a man, the poison of at least eight or ten arrows would be required. Professor Halford, of Melbourne, has made experiments with Solomon Island arrows, without any results.

There are many instances of Dutch soldiers having been wounded by the natives of Java and Borneo, but no case of death from tetanus among them is recorded. They were treated on the assumption that the arrows were poisoned, and as soon as possible after the wounds had been inflicted; but it is impossible to suppose that in every case the treatment should have been successful, had the poison been of a very severe nature.

The conclusion of the report of the commission is worth quoting:—

"Les accidents graves et souvent mortels, observés à la suite des aggressions des naturels, tenaient, dans

quelques cas, à des lésions organiques, mais presque toujours au tétanus, qui se déclarait aussi bien à la suite de blessures insignifiantes, qu'à la suite de blessures sérieuses par elles-mêmes, jamais immédiatement après l'accident (ce qui aurait pu faire admettre l'empoisonnement par les poisons convulsivants) mais toujours après plusieurs jours, quelquefois après des semaines, ce qui exclut toute idée d'empoisonnement."

If it were only possible to make people believe all this, and that the wound of a poisoned arrow ought in reality to be only a trifling affair, we should have far fewer deaths than is at present the case. It seems, however, that the strongest minds are those most affected by the nervous feeling produced by such a wound. It must doubtless be almost an impossibility to regard such a calamity with calmness.

In the Levuka hospital many cures have been made, so that the disease is, after all, not so fatal as is supposed. But these cures would be impossible on board the ships most in the habit of visiting those islands. Those ships have no doctors, and very few medicines, and those of the most simple sort. Chloroform, morphia, and various other remedies which have been suggested, are not supplied to them. The best chance for any one who may have been wounded by an arrow supposed to be poisoned, is to take advantage of the five or six days which usually elapse before the appearance of dangerous symptoms, to get into a cooler climate.

CHAPTER VI.

A CRUISE IN SOUTHERN SEAS.

If we were to take a cruise from New Ireland in a north-westerly direction, before crossing the line we should come to New Hanover, at the northern end of New Ireland; the Admiralty Islands, and the Hermit, Exchequer, and Anchorite groups.

It is not my intention to cross the line in this book. The islands north of the equator differ so completely in appearance, and their natives are so different in colour, habits, languages, from the islands and natives south of the equator, that I do not propose to mix the two. Volumes of interesting reading might be written of the Marshall, Caroline, Gilbert, Ellice, and Phœnix groups, and the Pellews alone might supply materials for a book. But much has been written of these islands, and I do not care to tread in the footsteps of the more skilful narrators who have gone before me. Much has also been written of the islands to which I have principally devoted my attention, and among the natives of which I have mingled perhaps more than most people.

Let us suppose that we are starting on this cruise

from New Ireland to New Hanover, and on from New Hanover to the Admiralties, Hermits, and Exchequers; and then, having reached the equator, we will strike south to Astrolabe Bay, on the north-east coast of New Guinea. Thence we will try to get through Dampier Straits, but there we shall probably fail, as we are only in a sailing ship, and the winds and currents are adverse. But as our destination is the Woodlark and Laughlan groups, and after those the Louisiades, we will get there another way, viz. by going back with a fair wind to New Britain, and beating down St. George's Channel. When we have made this *détour* our course lies clear before us. This will show us something of all these islands: and it is, in fact, a cruise I made in 1881, in H.M.S. *Beagle*.

To begin with New Hanover. On two occasions I have attempted to land on that inhospitable coast, and in each attempt failed most signally. This was not so much attributable to the undoubtedly savage character of the natives, as to the extreme difficulty of bringing a sailing ship anywhere near the coast. It is quite unsurveyed (though of late years the Germans have done a little surveying there), the currents are very strong, and the wind so far north as that is light, and cannot be depended on. We tried twice to pick our way in as cautiously as might be, with anchors ready for letting go, but it was no good; we could find no passage which was possible for us. A steamer might have been more successful.

Unless Mr. H——, to whom I have alluded before, has been there (and I think he probably has by this time), I do not suppose that any European has ever landed on the south coast.

The natives have a bad reputation, but I don't suppose that they are worse than the New Irelanders, and with those we found that it was possible to mix. Their carvings are magnificent, and the few specimens of their weapons which have been obtained are the best made that I have seen. The island is a most tempting looking place to land in, and from all accounts is not very thickly inhabited.

Little or no friendly communication is kept up with New Ireland. The natives of that island are much afraid of the New Hanoverians, who sometimes come across the straits which divide the two countries, and do great havoc.

The New Ireland natives describe extraordinary dances as taking place in New Hanover, in which each native personates a different sort of bird. The dress of each dancer is made of the feathers of the bird which he represents; and his head-dress is carved in the shape of a bird's head, so as to carry out the delusion. But, alas! we had no chance of seeing any of these dances, as we could not land on the island. I could find out very little, in fact, about the people there, except that they were good at fighting and dancing. Carving, I knew they were good at, for I had seen some of their carved bird's heads, which had been taken from

captured canoes. Their canoes were well made, but were not so good as those of New Ireland.

There was a rumour of a large lake in the interior, which was, for some reason or other, held very sacred.

On the whole I was much disappointed with New Hanover, for I had to confess myself beaten, as far as communication with the natives went. True, we only tried the south coast: perhaps the north coast may be more accessible. It is quite possible that, at the date at which I am writing, traders may have been established there by Mr. H——.

Next to New Hanover we come to the Admiralty Group. Though not very much is known of these islands, we have far more information concerning them than we have of New Hanover.

Two of the outlying islands, Jesus Maria and La Vandola, were sighted by the Spaniards, but I believe they did not communicate with the natives. The *Alacrity* and the *Challenger* both visited the biggest of the group, Admiralty Island, as it is called; and one of the naturalists on board the *Challenger*, Mr. Moseley, has collected some valuable information concerning it. As I was rather pressed for time I only visited Jesus Maria. Though it is not known whether any Europeans ever landed in the group before 1875—when the *Challenger* went there—it is probable that it had been visited by whalers before that time. A *bêche de mer* ship, searching for new fields, came to the Admiralties the year I was there; and Mr. H——, from New Britain,

also visited them once. It is possible that other ships may have been there before 1881, but I can find no record of it anywhere.

On the occasion of my visit in 1881 the country seemed to be but thinly inhabited. I only saw one village in Jesus Maria, but that was a very large one. The inhabitants appeared to be a fierce, warlike race, more Papuan than anything else, but they have no doubt got an admixture of other blood.

They surrounded our little schooner in such large numbers that it was considered advisable to rig the boarding nettings. The trading was carried on with intense eagerness. In those days we were all wild about *curios*, and certainly a better place for obtaining them than these islands could not be found. The carved wooden bowls are most graceful in shape, and delicate in execution, while the variety of spears, with heads made of obsidian, was very great. So eager were the natives here that their babies were held up for us to buy. Bottles and hoop-iron were accepted, but at the sight of the first tomahawk they refused all offers of hoop-iron. This was unfortunate, but I begged every one to keep our American axes hidden, for if one of these had been displayed, tomahawks too would have been useless.

The first day we were there we were a good deal excited to see a white man on shore, who fired a gun off to attract our attention. On arriving at the village we made what inquiries we could about him, but as it

was late in the evening we did nothing more that day.

Next day, when we went ashore, the white man was waiting for us on the beach. He turned out to be a Scotchman, called Donald Dow. He had been landed on the main island by a *bêche de mer* ship, but had escaped from thence to Jesus Maria, as his life had been frequently attempted in the former place. He had been six weeks on the island when we found him; and had collected so much *bêche de mer* that he refused our offer to take him away, saying that he preferred sticking to his fish. We therefore gave him what things he wanted, and did not press him further to come.

I suppose he is the only white man who has actually lived among the natives of the Admiralty Islands. I am not sure that he was much pleased at our visit, for no doubt the trading we had done rather diminished the value of his trade goods.

If he was not killed, he said, and if the captain of the *Dancing Wave* remembered to pick him up, he would be a rich man for life, with the fish he had already got. Whether he ever was picked up I never heard.

The Admiralty Islanders have some very singular customs, which are met with nowhere else; but they are, unfortunately, of a nature which cannot be described here.

I should imagine that these islanders originally came

from the New Guinea coast, perhaps from Humboldt Bay, but they are crossed with other blood than Papuan, possibly from New Ireland or New Hanover.

The voyage from New Guinea is not a long one for canoes. New Guinea natives very often swoop down in large numbers on the Hermit Islands, which are about the same distance from them as New Hanover; and when that happens the Hermits have a bad time.

The men of Jesus Maria are evidently very vain. They decorate themselves in a very elaborate manner. The most remarkable ornament they wear is a circular piece of tortoiseshell, from three to four inches in diameter, very neatly carved in fretwork patterns. To show up this pattern the ornament is fastened on to the base of a large shell, which, after it has been ground and polished, looks like a delicate piece of porcelain. It is a very handsome ornament, and what is remarkable is that no two are alike.

The women, however, have to content themselves with the charms bestowed on them by nature. It is evidently not considered good taste for them to adorn their persons.

The people here have one very curious habit, which also exists in New Ireland. This is using a certain kind of clay or earth as an article of food. This clay is apparently not very common, and it is only found in the bush, under large stones, which have to be removed to get at it. It has a reddish colour in its natural state. It is washed to remove the impurities, and

when this is done it is kneaded into oblong cakes, each weighing two or three pounds. After this it is well smoked, and wrapped in leaves, and hung up in the houses to be used as required. It must, I should think, be terribly indigestible. I tasted a small piece, as large as a hazel-nut, which I did not, however, swallow. It tasted not unlike very bad chocolate, but that might have been partly due to the smoking. I found that the cockroaches on board ship were very fond of it; but what is there a cockroach will not eat?

I wondered while I was at Jesus Maria whether there had ever been any connection between the obsidian weapons in use there, and the creases of the Malays. The splinter which breaks off a block of this material under the influence of heat and careful manipulation, is precisely the shape of the Malay weapon. It is extremely brittle, but the edges are as sharp as razors. It is often, in fact, used amongst many sorts of natives for shaving. Donald Dow, who had seen some of their fights, told me that one of these spears would go into a man as if he were butter.

Most of the men wore a dagger, made of obsidian, in their big mops of hair; and these, I think, were the best made and most murderous-looking weapons I have seen.

In the town was a large house, with posts carved in a manner which, at home, would have called for the interference of the police. There were a number of pigs' and perhaps of human skulls hanging up in it. It

did not appear to be sacred in any way. We were allowed to look at it as long as we chose, but I did not go inside. The women and children were standing by, looking on and laughing, which would not probably have been the case had the house been regarded with any great reverence. There were a number of big bundles in it on shelves, carefully enveloped in multitudinous wrappings. I could not find out what they were, as Mr. Dow seemed already bored with our short acquaintance, and had gone out fishing. They were very probably human bodies. It is the practice in many parts to dispose of the illustrious dead in this manner.

Temple, the building certainly was not. I believe there are no such things as temples, as we understand the term, among the Papuan or Polynesian races. There may possibly be some in Bougainville—I have been told that there are,—where actual sacrifices are offered up to some deity. I have also heard of them far in the west of New Guinea, where the natives are more of a Malay than a Papuan type. But in the islands about which I am now writing I do not believe that such things exist, though joss houses, or places in which to keep carved figures, mummies, skeletons, heads, firstfruits of the land, etc., exist in abundance, and are looked on as more or less sacred.

In the islands of Micronesia, and many islands north of the line, and also in Tonga there are remains of gigantic edifices. In Tonga especially are to be found some huge monoliths, erected when and how no one

knows. It is the opinion of men who have carefully studied the subject, that, like the carved stone images of Easter Island, their origin is due to a race of men inhabiting those islands before the present occupants. Perhaps there were giants in those days; one would certainly think so, on looking at their work.

But no similar remains of former architecture are to be met with among the Polynesians; and the wooden houses they build for the protection of their dead and their wooden images, serve no special purpose but to keep out the wind and the rain.

There are many proofs that former and extinct races have at one time inhabited many of the Pacific islands. The natives now living on Easter Island are Hervey Islanders, speaking the same language, bearing the same names, and having the same traditions and appearance. How they ever got to Easter Island, which must be more than a thousand miles from the Hervey Group, I leave to the wise men to decide. At one time the Easter Islanders used to worship the huge stone images; though no traditions of theirs—and their traditions date back further than those of most natives—throw any light on their origin.

Some of the smaller figures from Easter Island may be seen by making a journey to the British Museum, where they are displayed under the main entrance.

There may be a solitary instance of Papuan image-worship in New Guinea, where I am now writing from. I am told that, in a certain spot, there is a huge hewn

stone buried; that it is—or was—enclosed in an earthen pot, and that the welfare of the Koiari tribe depends upon its not being disturbed. In these circumstances it is somewhat difficult to investigate the matter; but possibly in a few years' time no objections may be made to its being disinterred. At all events it is not necessary to believe in its existence till it is brought to light.

I took my departure with much regret from the Admiralties. The natives bade us adieu in a boisterous manner, peculiar to themselves, and as they crowded out to us without their women, and with no articles for barter in their canoes, it was considered advisable to leave the boarding nettings where they were. Soon a light breeze caught us, and we quickly got away from the canoes.

I speculated a good deal on what Donald Dow's probable fate would be, but comforted myself with the reflection that a wilful man must have his way.

Now that the Germans have hoisted their flag there, the Admiralty Islanders will probably become more and more acquainted with the ways of white men. But as the population is small it will probably, as has already been the case in the Hermits, disappear rapidly before those energetic colonists. If this should be so it will be much to be regretted, for a more remarkable race does not exist in the Pacific.

The next islands we come to in our cruise are the Hermits—a very small group, with one of the very

smallest of populations. I think men, women, and children, all told, do not number one hundred. I will say very little about them, as I did not stay there more than twelve hours, my only object in going there being to make some inquiries about a ship. But even in twelve hours one has time to make a few observations, and many things would appear remarkable in that short length of time which would pass unnoticed after a residence of six months.

The natives are lighter in colour than the Admiralty Islanders, having probably mixed blood with the natives of Guap, or, as it is better known, Yap. A German trader has been established here by the ubiquitous and energetic Mr. H——.

Though the group is small it is very rich, and the natives used, when I was there, willingly to work hard at making copra for the smallest conceivable remuneration. But a time came when they considered the work too hard, and the pay not sufficiently good, and one day they murdered the trader, and looted his store. A short time after this event, Mr. H——'s small steamer visited the group. Being, of course, unaware of the trader's death, the captain and supercargo, who had always been in the habit of considering the natives as harmless, landed to walk up to the house; but no sooner had they reached it, than the captain was shot through the heart. The supercargo, by wonderful good fortune, escaped back to the ship. The ship meanwhile had managed to get fast on the reef, and with a

falling tide it seemed probable that she would have to remain there six or eight hours. The natives opened fire on her, and a French creole was shot in two places. However, by heaving most of the cargo overboard, they eventually got off and returned to New Britain, to report events.

A short time afterwards two German war-ships went to the Hermits, and took such revenge that the population now is, I believe, reduced to about half what it used to be.

After this punishment had been inflicted, Mr. H—— sent another trader there, and this time he got about fifty natives from the Laughlan group to accompany his agent. His intention was to be independent of the native labour of the place, and effectually to guard against a repetition of any such murder. So far, I believe, all has gone well, and is likely to continue to do so.

All this happened two years after my visit. When I was there the natives appeared to be the quietest and most orderly people possible, and the trader would have laughed to scorn any idea of being killed by them. No doubt he committed the one great mistake of becoming over-confident. There is no more difficult feeling than that of over-confidence to contend against. Constantly, in New Britain and other places, I have thought, "What is the use of carrying a revolver? the people know me well, and have never molested me." And as I always had a short gun, a far more serviceable weapon, I used to think the revolver a great nuisance.

But the natives used to look on the gun as being meant to shoot pigeons only, while a revolver was regarded as a hint to them to be on their good behaviour. The moral effect of a revolver is good, but for actual use I know no more useless weapon. Still in many places it is a wise precaution to carry one, as the only time you are likely to want it is when you have left it at home.

The most remarkable things which I saw in the Hermits were the dancing dresses. The bark is stripped in the piece from a tree much resembling the silver birch, and on this bark are worked the most elaborate and minute patterns in feathers of all colours. The labour must be immense, and the slaughter of small birds to supply the feathers very great. Though I did not see one, I can imagine that a dance in the Hermits must be a very pretty thing to witness, though nowadays there can hardly be enough dancing men and girls in the whole group to produce one decent set of Lancers.

These islands are very small and do not contain any very thick cover, so it is extraordinary how, on the occasion of the visit of the two German ships, the natives should have concealed themselves, as I am told they did. They must have taken to the trees, for the sailors marched all over the islands.

A native has a wonderful capacity for concealing himself in a place which would hardly hide a dog. No doubt he is much the colour of the bush. A black

servant of mine once escaped into the bush in Wallis Island, and after much trouble was caught, but he told me that I and others had almost stepped on him several times without seeing him. This faculty is well known in Australia, where even skilled bushmen cannot trust their own eyes for seeing natives, but have to employ other natives for the purpose.

The only danger which now threatens the German station in the Hermit Islands is the habit the Admiralty Islanders have of making attacks upon the natives. This might prove rather a serious thing for the trader stationed there; but I should think that after one attempt they would discontinue the practice.

The Hermits are a difficult group to reach in a sailing ship while the south-east trade is blowing. They are almost on the equator, and the limit of the trade-wind is, as a rule, at about the fourth degree south latitude. They lie in a region of calms and stifling heat. Moreover the currents are very strong, and have a tendency to set a ship to the westward, while a heavy swell from the south-east is often experienced. All this makes navigation in a sailing ship extremely dangerous, the more so as the waters are unsurveyed, and it is to the eye alone that one can trust. In a small ship it is possible to sweep, and tow with the boats, as we had to do more than once; but these expedients would have no effect on a larger ship, and she might be set on to a reef by the swell, without the possibility of doing anything.

So to future travellers in these waters, I say, "If you must go in a sailing ship, go in a small one." The danger to small ships in this part of the world is the temptation they offer to natives to try to seize them. The gunwale of a small craft is within easy reach of a man standing up in a canoe, and the cunning of natives is such that they may come out to you in the most friendly manner possible, meaning all the time to make an attempt at capture. At a word given by the chief, fifty are on board in an instant, and unless you are well prepared you may happen to fare badly.

The signs, however, of any intentions of this sort are readily apparent to an experienced eye. If the natives bring out worthless things for barter, and leave their women at home, it is just as well to get a supply of oars, and prevent the canoes from touching the side of the vessel. They will very soon see that you suspect them, and will abandon the attempt, for with them an attack is not considered advisable unless it can be made suddenly and treacherously.

The native as a rule, it must be confessed, is not a courageous person, but I except those of Buka and Bougainville from this sweeping assertion. He will fight well enough at times, when in overwhelming numbers, and with the advantage of good cover. What he likes most of all is a fortified rock, or a rock which only an active bare-footed savage can climb.

It was a rock of this description, in the New Hebrides, up to which the blue-jackets of H.M.S. *Cormorant* were

led by a guide, whose services should never have been accepted; though, as he professed to have an intimate knowledge of the locality, it is difficult to see how they could have been refused. Ten times the number of men landed would have been unable to take the position, and our men had to fall back, with the loss of Lieutenant Luckraft, who was killed.

A white man must be at an immense disadvantage with a native in the bush; his boots, clothes, and inexperience all tend to make his progress tedious and painful. The naked savage, on the contrary, can slip through the thickest "lawyers" and "wait-a-bit" thorns, observe the white man's movements, and attack him when he is in the greatest difficulties. The larger the body of white men, the more powerless they become in the bush. Single file is the only formation possible, and, as the native's track is exactly the width of the native's foot, walking along it in boots is no easy performance.

In my opinion, it must be a very serious matter which would justify sending a body of men into the bush, if they had to march along a native track.

Of the Exchequer and Anchorite groups I have very little to say, as I have not landed in either. We sighted them in the course of our cruise, but it was against our wish, as we were drifted towards them; accordingly I know very little of their inhabitants. There are certainly very few of them, for the groups are but small. They keep up a little communication with the Hermits, and perhaps, now, German traders may have been established

there. The Exchequers take their name from the French word *échiquier*, a chess-board. I suppose they have been placed on our charts under their present name by some person who knew not French.

After a wearisome time of drifting, during which we got a long way to the westward, we at last got a breeze with which we could shape our course to Astrolabe Bay, on the north coast of New Guinea.

An account of my experiences of Astrolabe Bay, and of its inhabitants, will be found later on in the chapter on New Guinea, so for the present we will pass them by, and proceed with our cruise.

Though the various islands in the vicinity of Astrolabe Bay were inhabited, I did not attempt to land on any of them. The sea was big enough to make it dangerous for a boat, and I was aware that the inhabitants of these islands were migratory in their habits, being for the most part natives of a small group which Maclay had named "the Archipelago of Contented Men." These natives belonged to Astrolabe Bay, and would have presented no new feature of interest. But Maclay's name for them is interesting, as it shows that he entertains much the same opinion of their lazy habits that I do. "The Archipelago of useless idle men" would have been probably nearer the mark.

But whether the name was intended in a sarcastic sense or not, it exactly describes their condition. Contented men they are with a vengeance. Perhaps one of the filibustering expeditions, so much feared at one time,

would provide them with a grievance; then, possibly, what they lost in contentment might be made up in a sudden fever of resentment.

After bidding farewell to Astrolabe Bay, we spent several days in making ineffectual efforts to follow the New Guinea coast, as far as the Louisiade Archipelago, but were ultimately compelled to abandon the attempt and return to New Britain.

Continuing on our way thence to the Louisiades, we will take in the Woodlark and Laughlan groups.

Woodlark Island has always been supposed to be very little known, and, as a fact, our knowledge of it is but slight. But Mr. H—— knows a good deal concerning the Woodlarks, as he does of many places which are supposed to be unknown. For instance, Trobriand Island, one of the Laughlan Group, is represented in the charts by a curved line of dots, but for some years Mr. H—— had a trader on it, and had made a rough chart, which he kept for his own use. It was naturally not to his interest to announce to the world the various discoveries he made. I had been some years in the Pacific before I knew there was a trader in the Laughlan Group, and I feel sure no rival trader knew it either, and I only found it out by accident. The Laughlan trader used to include the Woodlark in his district, and make periodical visits there to trade.

Now that the Pacific is becoming more known, and that it would be impossible for any one to keep his knowledge entirely to himself, Mr. H—— has, I think,

given his charts to the captain of the German man-of-war *Carola*, and no doubt they will soon be published for the benefit of the world.

The short space of time I stayed at the Woodlarks only gave me time to notice a few of the most striking peculiarities of the natives.

The first thing that struck me was the extreme good looks of the women. They are a light copper colour, and many of them are really very pretty. Their figures, too, were very good, not being so much spoiled by the heavy vegetable diet as those of most natives.

But the men were not beautiful. They were of very small stature, and were covered with the usual skin disease. Some of them were dwarfs, with deformed bodies and gigantic heads, and very nasty little men they seemed. They had a fashion of wearing their hair in long twisted cords, which in many cases came down to the waist. Of course foreign hair was twisted into their own, to produce this result. The hair once twisted up in this manner could evidently never be undone. The cords were greased and gummed till they became stiff. A dirtier fashion I never saw.

The heads of the women, however, were differently arranged. They wore their hair in nice comfortable looking mops. They appeared to be a very gay laughing community, and seemed at one time to be going to lay violent hands on one member of our party, and carry him off. He was a modest youth, and seemed a little overcome with their attentions.

The Woodlark weapons were somewhat peculiar; long solid spears made of ebony, evidently not meant for throwing, as they were in some cases fifteen feet long, and very thick and heavy. They seemed more to be intended for using as boarding pikes, or spears to poke with. The swords were also made of ebony, and were very formidable-looking weapons, very short and heavy, but with a fine edge, which the extreme hardness of the wood admits of.

Several of the men spoke a little English, at which I was much surprised, as I rather flattered myself that I was one of the first to visit the island. I did not know then that there had been a trader on the Laughlans. They asked eagerly for tobacco, which also disappointed me, for it clearly proved that they had had considerable intercourse with whites. I found afterwards that in reality they had only had intercourse with this trader, and that he was the only white man they knew.

The canoes were very large and well made. The thwarts were well carved, and the figure of a duck was elaborately fashioned in the bows of each. As these canoes make considerable sea voyages, visiting the Laughlans periodically, I wondered whether the duck was chosen as an emblem of strong flight.

The people here seemed to be on very bad terms with their bush neighbours, and we were warned, with many solemn head-shakings, that they were "no good."

I bought several model canoes, in their way as great

curiosities as the big ones. As I saw no obsidian, I suppose that shells were used for carving with.

Meanwhile, the ship was standing off and on, and the captain getting impatient, so I had to leave.

The north coast, where we were, seems to be deficient in good harbours, but on the south they are excellent, though the channels through the reefs are somewhat intricate. In fact, on passing the weather end of the island, we found ourselves in such an intricate network of shoals and reefs that it seemed impossible to go on. We did not draw much water, however, and felt our way carefully till we were through them.

Although I did not visit the Laughlans during my cruise in 1881, I have since visited them twice, so I may as well include them in this chapter. It is a very small group indeed, and the islands are of a totally different nature to the Woodlarks. The people are precisely the same, and the same as the Papuans of the east coast of New Guinea.

The group is a difficult one to find, on account of its smallness, and also because the highest land is not forty feet above the sea level. The tops of the cocoa-nut trees are seen before any land is visible. It is what is called an atoll; that is to say, a semi-circular or horse-shoe shaped reef, with a few small islands on it, and a lagoon in the centre. Its greatest diameter is about three miles, and the greatest width of any individual island is not more than two or three hundred yards. There are seven or eight big villages, and the

houses are of the meanest possible sort of architecture. If you place two playing cards on the table, resting against each other, you have a Laughlan Island house.

The natives are a colony from the Woodlark Islands, and think they have bettered their condition by adopting the Laughlans as their home, as life there is easy, and there are no bush tribes to cause annoyance. They are extraordinarily friendly. Many of them speak a little English, curiously mixed with German words. The chief, To-muiu, speaks very good English indeed. He told me that he had sailed in a whaler when he was a young man. How he ever got back to his home again is a mystery.

There were the same good looks among the women here as in the Woodlarks, but the men were a finer lot. They were certainly cleaner, as they are great fishermen, and constantly in the water. They never fight, for they have no one to quarrel with; and when I landed, there was not a single native with a weapon of any sort. The few old spears they produced later had evidently been hanging up in their houses for years without being disturbed, as they were coated thick with smoke.

These natives might well be classed with those of the Archipelago of Contented Men. They have to work a little harder, perhaps, for their living, as their chief diet is fish; but the lagoon abounds with them to such an extent that it is no very hard matter to supply themselves with plenty of food. The islands, which are

composed principally of coral sand, produce little but the cocoa-nut. That, however, grows in great abundance; and a judicious mixture of yam, which is also found here, and cocoa-nut produces a dish than which there are many worse things.

Both men and women are decently clothed. The men wear a garment of stout leaves, which have precisely the same appearance, though not quite so gaudy, as the trunks of an acrobat. It must take years of practice to put this one garment on. I tried, and failed most signally, to the immense amusement of the whole male population. The natives of the east coast of New Guinea wear the same dress of leaves.

The women wear a very voluminous kilt, sometimes two or three of them, over each other. They are made of grass, leaves, or fibre, stained various colours. In wearing two or three, care is taken to produce an æsthetic mixture of colours—a little vanity which is met with sometimes at home amongst ladies who like to display petticoats of many colours. It is considered just as essential here to walk well as it is at home, but the two styles are not quite the same. The Laughlan lady, in walking, at each step gives a little twist to the hips, which has the effect of making the kilts fly out right and left, in what is considered a highly fashionable and beautiful manner. Though a somewhat similar effect to this may, I am informed, occasionally be seen in petticoats at home, still I fear that the firm stride of the Laughlan lady could hardly be reproduced in

English boots. To see ten or twelve of these ladies walking in the unsociable formation of single file, which they adopt, with their many-coloured kilts flying out on either side, is a very pretty sight.

The trader, at the date of my visits, was not there, and the people were accordingly very hard up for tobacco. I made them big presents of it, but they had nothing to give in exchange but a few ebony spears; these cut up, however, into very good walking-sticks.

Though they were such great fishermen they did not care for our fish-hooks, but infinitely preferred their own, and I have no doubt they are quite right to do so. Theirs have the great advantage of not requiring any bait, as they are made of pearl shell with a strong wooden barb. The glitter of the pearl shell in the water is far more attractive to the fish than any bait could be. After a very short sojourn in the Pacific I gave up European and took to native fish-hooks, and always found the latter more deadly.

There is no wood in the Laughlans for building the big canoes of the Woodlark Islands. What native canoes there are, are wretched little things, only designed, as a rule, to carry one person. For large canoes the people have to depend entirely on their Woodlark neighbours.

They have also to depend on the Woodlarks for all their implements, such as stone axes, and knives, etc. This was the case, at least, before the trader made his appearance. Since then the age of stone has vanished,

and the natives, having skipped several intermediate ages, have adopted the implements of the iron age. There is no rock to be found in the group, suitable for the manufacture of stone implements. They are clever at making ornaments, especially shell bracelets, for their lagoon supplies them with many things besides fish. Turtles are caught in abundance, particularly in the breeding season. It is to these low sandy islands that they are above all fond of coming to deposit their eggs. Except for food the people did not care for them, the shell being formerly considered useless; but now that they have discovered its value they collect it in great quantities. I have now mentioned the principal, indeed the only sources of wealth to the Laughlan Islanders. *Bêche de mer*, it is true, is also found, but in too deep water to make it worth while to take the trouble to dive for it.

There are no animals, not even rats. There are a few birds of small descriptions; but the bush, if it can be called bush, is singularly uninteresting. There are enormous cocoanut-eating land-crabs, however, which are uncommonly good eating.

Fishing on the reefs at night with torches is capital fun; the only objection is that one cuts one's feet to pieces on the coral, and possibly may have to spend the greater part of the night in picking out the spines of the sea-urchin with a knife. The natives' hands and eyes are never at fault. They never tumble, as I did, into eight feet of water in the coral; nor do they ever

pick up any stinging animal, who makes himself remembered for a week afterwards. I found boots no protection to the feet for this sport, but I did find an old pair of fencing-gloves of great use to the hands. The natives are immensely amused if some coral fish sticks a spike into your hand which stiffens your arm for twenty-four hours. However, it was great fun, and our rewards in the shape of cray-fish and other monsters were great. A tussle with an octopus is a great event. The natives are careful to stab him repeatedly before they will dive for him, and put their arms into his hole in the coral. They say they are extremely good to eat, but I never got so far as that.

A native's opinion as to what is good to eat, and what not, must be received with caution. The shell-fish they recommend are very good at the time—but the after effects! I sincerely pity Robinson Crusoe if he had daily to go through the experience which I did once in the Laughlans. I have avoided shell-fish ever since, till the other day, when I discovered in New Guinea a number of rock oysters. The natives said I should die, but I exercised my own discretion on this occasion, and with no serious results.

The native must be blessed with powers of digestion entirely denied to the white man. It is a satisfaction, however, to know that, on the other hand, some of the white man's food disagrees with the native. Cheese produces terrible results; and I induced my host, who gave me the shell-fish, to eat some anchovy paste,

which I really believe nearly poisoned him. Certainly a sudden change to a meat diet is too much for them.

It was a party of Laughlan natives that Mr. H—— took up to the Hermits, after the murder of the trader there. He could have made no better selection, as they are the quietest natives he could have found anywhere, and in another island would be likely to work well. They would be very unlikely to quarrel with the natives they found there, and would be a very good guard for the trader. We spent a pleasant time, and were sorry to leave the Laughlans; but time was pressing, and I had to go elsewhere.

Of the Trobriands it is not necessary to say more than that they are exceedingly rich islands, and produce various sorts of wood, not met with elsewhere, unless perhaps it be on the mainland of New Guinea. The natives are Papuans, but have the reputation of being treacherous. Ebony exists in large quantities; most of their weapons, and many of their implements, are made of it. There is also an extremely hard white wood, which I have never seen except from the Trobriands. It looks almost like ivory when polished, and should be of service for cabinet making.

So little are the islands in the group known, that they are hardly marked at all in the chart. This seems strange, for although they may not have been visited of late years, whalers must formerly have sighted them, and occasionally communicated with them for wood and water.

The next islands we come to are those called the Louisiade Archipelago, a group of considerable extent, to the south-eastward of New Guinea, of which they seem in every respect to be a continuation. They are most of them small, and surrounded by innumerable reefs, which make all navigation there an affair of danger.

I believe the Louisiades to be part of the great sunken Barrier reef, as it is termed, which in places runs parallel with the great Barrier reef of Australia, as far as Cape York, and then follows the New Guinea coast as far as the Louisiades. There it apparently turns the corner and follows the coast to the north-west, and seems to come to an end at the D'Entrecasteaux or Trobriand groups. The sunken barrier is only visible in a few places, as deep water covers it, and in some places, such as the Papuan Gulf, it does not exist, doubtless on account of the immense amount of fresh water discharged by the Fly and other rivers.

The Louisiades are in reality a part of New Guinea, and it would perhaps be more correct to include them in the few remarks I shall make about that country later on; but as we have reached them in the course of our cruise, and do not mean to follow up the New Guinea coast for the present, we may as well investigate them now.

At the time of my visit they were in a very humble state, as the Brooker Islanders had been punished for some murders they had been guilty of. I only went

to three of the islands in the group, but the natives of these were as polite and hospitable as possible.

The people here are supposed to be cannibals; and probably some of them are, as a favourite ornament of theirs is a human jaw-bone, which is worn on the arms; but beyond the report, and the fact of their wearing jaw-bones, I know nothing about it one way or the other.

The stone implements made here are very fine. I got some axes of enormous size, which I am sure could not have been intended for use. They seemed rather to be a common possession; perhaps two or three belonged to the village, and were exhibited on state occasions.

The natives display great skill and delicacy in all articles of their manufacture. The fishing-nets especially are wonderfully made, and the twine, though very fine, is as strong as any we could produce of the same thickness. The little ornaments and shell bracelets are extremely pretty, and a Louisiadian dressed in his best is an imposing sight.

It was here that I obtained my first birds of paradise—not the common gaudy sort (the Raggiana), though they are very pretty, but a beautiful little scarlet bird, with two immensely long tail feathers, which terminate in feathers of a brilliant metallic green. It is called, I believe, the king bird of paradise.

At Blanchard Island the shooting was very varied

and good; and the walking, not too difficult for enjoyment.

The canoes built at Teste and Brooker Islands are very fine. There is not much carving or ornamentation about them, but they are good sea boats, and capable of holding a considerable number of men. There were not many of them to be seen, however, as most had been destroyed in the course of the punishment to which I have already referred. The people of the different islands in the Louisiade Archipelago do not seem to be able to live on amicable terms with each other, and fleets of canoes would constantly start on marauding expeditions. A better state of things is established there now, as the London Mission Society has established two stations, and the native teachers exercise a considerable amount of influence over the inhabitants.

The natives build neat-looking, beehive-shaped houses, which are very picturesque. I hear that some of these people are not quite so friendly now as they used to be. At the time I write of there were no white men there; but there have been some since, pearl-shelling, and fishing for *bêche de mer;* hence, perhaps, the trouble. The Teste Islanders, formerly the quietest of the quiet, were, I believe, very angry, because thirty of their men, who had gone to fish in an English schooner, were reported drowned. The report was untrue; but an unfortunate white man, who went there while they were in this frame of mind, was pelted off the island with cocoa-nuts.

I believe but very little is known of the bigger islands to the south-east of the group. The natives are reported to be very savage and warlike, but I did not visit them, and so I do not know. A safe passage for sailing ships through this group would shorten the route from Australia to China considerably.

The Louisiade Archipelago brings us to the end of the cruise on which I invited the reader to accompany me. It is, as I have said, for the most part a description of an actual cruise which I took through these little-known parts of the world in the year 1881—a cruise full of interest and instruction to me, some of which I trust I may have been able to impart, however feebly, to my readers.

CHAPTER VII.

OTHER ISLANDS.

In the preceding chapters, I have said little or nothing of the various groups and numerous islands inhabited by the fairer-skinned races, nor do I intend to say much about them.

In the first place, I have not lived much in those islands, with the exception of Rotumah, where I once spent six months; and, in the second place, they are so well known in the present day, and so much has been written of them, that I certainly could say nothing that would be new.

The natives in some of them are adopting European habits, especially in the matter of clothes. In Tongatabu, in which island the capital of Tonga is situated, you may see the natives playing cricket—and very well they play too. I believe they have never sustained a defeat, though they play an eleven of every man-of-war that visits the place. They were first supplied with the necessary implements by the officers of H.M.S. *Emerald*, on board which ship I was a guest at the

time. We came there professing to teach them the game, but I am afraid to say by how much we were defeated. In fact, it has become necessary to legislate on the subject of cricket, and to limit the number of days on which that game may be played, to two per week. The Tongans, like some gentlemen in England and Australia, sacrificed all their time to it, and their families suffered in consequence.

If you are honoured with an invitation to dine at the palace at Tongatabu, you are given a dinner on the English pattern, and wines of every sort under the sun to wash it down with.

I only once attended one of those feasts, and, as it was a very big occasion, some of the princesses did not disdain to make the puddings with their own hands.

The way the bottle circulated might have delighted the heart of the most veteran toper, but there was no method about it. A whiskey-bottle would pass, closely followed by claret or beer, or, in fact, by almost any drink that could be thought of; and the stream was so incessant, that a conscientious man who objected on principle to pass the bottle without advantage to himself, would hardly have seen the fish through.

It is a curious thing that the only mention made in Cook's travels of his giving native chiefs anything to drink, was at Tongatabu. He says, "He (the king) supped with us, and drank pretty freely of brandy and water, so that he went to bed with a sufficient dose." I don't think the king had more than a sufficient dose

on the occasion of my dinner with him; but the young prince had a very sufficient one indeed,—in fact, about two doses.

The ladies on Sundays are more magnificent than words can describe. From the hat or bonnet, in which a whole forestful of birds is perched, down to the feet —no, down to just above the feet—they are arrayed in a style no words can express.

But only the ultra-fashionable among them wear boots, and these are not unfrequently put on at the church door. One lady, I saw mysteriously remove a pin from her attire on her way home, and the whole structure collapsed. She very contentedly tucked silk gown and other garments under her arm, and walked off in the ordinary woman's dress of the country. Here too, for the first time since leaving Oxford, I saw "mortar boards," or college caps. Six gentlemen, composing the choir I think, had them on.

It was a terrible experience in Tongatabu when they fired a return salute to the ship. Sometimes two or three guns went off together; and some that would not explode had two, or for aught I know three charges rammed into them, and went off at most unexpected times. I gave them a wide berth, as I did not trust the quality of the guns.

It would be difficult to write seriously of Tonga without introducing political matters, which would not prove of much interest, save to those whom they concern; and, as I said before, I know too little of the

natives to warrant me in expressing opinions about them.

Much has been written about the Tongans, but I believe the best account of their character is still to be found in Captain Cook's narrative. He relates how the Tongans dreaded the natives of an island called Feegee; but I think the tables have been turned now, and that the Fijians treat the Tongans with considerable respect.

The only other Tongan island I visited was Ni-afu. Geographically speaking it should not be included in the group at all, as it lies at a great distance from it. But the people are Tongans, and it is governed by a chief holding authority from King George of Tonga.

In the inaccessible nature of its coast it is something like Norfolk Island, but worse. Landing can only be managed on the calmest days, and even on those there is no spot where a boat can be beached. There is a slippery rock, on which the natives stand; and, as you watch your opportunity for a jump, they form a chain, holding each other's hands. You then make your spring, and the last native of the chain catches you any way he can, and hauls you up like a bale of goods. There are no canoes here; they would be quite useless. The islanders are wonderful swimmers; we met some of them swimming at a distance of two or three miles from the island. They were fishing, and each had a piece of light corklike wood under his arm, to support himself with, while round his neck hung a bag, in

which he kept his bait and put the fish he caught. They can only land at high water, though they can leap into the sea at any state of the tide. Sometimes, when they get out too far, and miss their opportunity of landing, they have to stay out the whole of another tide. They have no fear of sharks, and no accidents seem to occur.

This island is very subject to violent earthquake shocks. Some years ago a considerable part of it disappeared altogether. There was a village on the part which disappeared, and of course none of the inhabitants were heard of again. This is the only instance of the sort I have heard of in the Pacific; but in 1878, in New Britain, while the volcano there was in active eruption, a small island was upheaved in a night.

The natives of Ni-afu are the handsomest people I have anywhere seen. They are most scrupulously clean; indeed, half their life is spent in the water. Their skins are like satin, and the figures of the men and women are as near perfection as can be.

In the centre of the island is a lake of considerable size. Its greatest length is perhaps three miles, by two across. The water has a strong mineral taste, and is not fit to drink. Perhaps their habit of constantly bathing in this lake may account for the beautiful skins of the Ni-afu natives. It is possible that, like the hot springs of New Zealand, the mineral waters may have the effect of smoothing the wrinkles and making the skin soft.

Round the banks of the lake is to be found that curious bird the megapodius; and two or three times our horses came on their noses, through putting their feet into the tunnels dug by this bird.

How the horses got into the island is a mystery. It is a matter of great difficulty for a man to land; an impossibility, I should think, for a horse. We know, however, that Cook left horses at Tongatabu. Perhaps that portion of Ni-afu which sank offered some more practicable landing-place, in which case the horses may possibly be descendants of those left by Captain Cook. One has to learn over again how to ride on one of the horses here. Of course there are no saddles, but stirrups made of sinnet are used, and the loop is just sufficiently large to admit the big toe of each foot. There is only one pace, a hard gallop, and I found it was only necessary to observe two rules while riding. If you wish to start, pull at the horse's mouth as if it were a stone wall, and off you go. If you wish to stop, which is done very suddenly, slacken the rope which serves as a bridle, and the horse, at all events, comes to a stand still.

The natives are subject to the strictest laws, which seem all framed for the purpose of collecting the greatest possible revenue for the Government. For offences the most trivial in our eyes, fines range from ten to two hundred dollars; and, in default of payment, an absurdly long term of work on the roads is inflicted. But though about one sixth of the population are kept to

hard labour, there are no results. The roads are tracks cut through the bush, and no public buildings of any sort whatever exist. Offenders are always given the option of a fine, whatever the offence, except perhaps murder. In the case of white men the fine is fixed at whatever price the local chief thinks he can or will pay. The only sufferers by the hard-labour system are the families of the prisoners. I never saw a gang working, but I constantly saw them smoking and lying in the shade.

The only thing I know of for which Ni-afu is celebrated is the size of its cocoa-nuts. They are larger even than those of Rotumah, and therefore probably the largest in the world. They are used entirely for seed, and are largely exported for that purpose. Their market price has often been as high as one shilling apiece.

I stayed three days at Ni-afu, waiting for an opportunity to leave the island, but the wind had freshened, and the boat could not come in near to the rocks. I had therefore eventually to swim off to the boat, as I could wait no longer.

I have several times mentioned Rotumah, and, though now it forms part of the colony of Fiji, a few words about it may not be amiss.

At the time I write of, viz. the year 1879, it was an independent island; but the chiefs had presented a petition to the governor of Fiji, praying that they might be annexed to Great Britain. They had been

much shaken by religious quarrels, which had reached the length of actual wars, between the Wesleyans and Roman Catholics.

The natives have in them a strain of foreign blood, which gives them a Chinese appearance. By their traditions, of which I collected a good many, it would seem that they came from Hawaii, but they bear no resemblance to the Hawaiians, and their language is utterly different from any language to be met with in the Pacific.

Like the people of many of the small detached islands, they say that a man called Raho, and his sister, escaped from Hawaii in a small canoe. The quarrel which Raho had in that place with a friend of his, seems to have been hardly grave enough to warrant so extreme a course. He was attended in his canoe by two spirits, who flew overhead, carrying baskets of earth, and, when the provisions were exhausted, the earth was emptied into the sea, and Rotumah was the result. From Raho and his sister the present race have descended—so they say; but I cannot help having doubts on the subject.

It is not difficult, however, to accept the theory that the small detached islands have been peopled from the large groups, by canoes which have drifted to their shores. While I was at Rotumah, a canoe arrived from Futunah, an island at least three hundred miles distant. Four natives were on board, and they confessed to having eaten a fifth during the voyage.

There was another celebrated case, where some natives were blown in a canoe from the Humphrey Group, for a distance of eight hundred miles. They had been seven weeks in the canoe when they finally reached Raratonga.

How the large groups were peopled is too difficult a question for me to go into. But there are no groups known in the Pacific from whence Rotumah could have derived her people and language. Some clever man may explain it all some day, but at present it remains a mystery.

Coming from tradition to actual history, though it is an extremely difficult thing to tell where one ends and the other begins, we can go back perhaps three hundred years. The Government of the island before the annexation to Fiji presented features totally distinct from that of other islands, and especially from that of Hawaii. The supreme chief was termed the "sau," and was elected by the people every year. But though he was the supreme chief he had absolutely no power of any description whatever; his sole duty and object in life was to get fat. He was compelled to eat six or seven heavy meals in the day, between which he slept. No exercise was allowed him, and the fatter he grew the more he was looked up to. He might be elected many years running, and, as a matter of fact, if his food seemed to agree with him he invariably was re-elected. The only distinction which seems to have been accorded him was the right to wear a mat of very fine manufacture,

embroidered with red feathers. It was necessary for him to attend the deliberations of his people, though he had no voice in them. Perhaps he was regarded as a male prototype of the Goddess of Plenty. Should the "sau" not be re-elected, great was his fall; he then had to take his share of work with the rest.

The Rotumah councils could have had no affairs of very great importance to discuss, as there were no hostile neighbours to fight, though occasionally a rival "sau" would be started, and would have to be suppressed. The discussions probably related chiefly to the organization of dances, and feasts, and matters of equal solemnity.

At the present time there are several chiefs, who possess a small amount of influence; but the young men have got out of their hands to a great extent. Many of them have been taken away as sailors on board whalers and other ships, and know too much of English customs and ways to pay much respect to their chiefs.

From this practice, which for many years was followed, of taking away the pick of the young men to serve as sailors, the most fatal consequences have resulted. The population now has twice as many girls as young men. It is manifest that all the girls cannot be married, and it would therefore seem natural to expect that such girls as did receive offers of marriage would accept them. This, however, hardly ever happens. A Rotumah girl will scarcely ever consent to subject herself to matrimony of her own free will; and if the parents compel her to do so, she probably leaves her

husband immediately and returns home. The evils of this system must be obvious to every one: and one of the results is that the population, already greatly diminished, is still decreasing rapidly. The chiefs recognize the evil, but the young men think only of themselves, and, not unnaturally in such circumstances, their greatest wish is to leave the island. The girls are not as a rule pretty, though they have good figures.

Though I hear it is all very different now, when I was there, there could not have been in the world a more pleasant people. The principal chief, Alipati, and his family would go out of their way to supply me with everything; and during a six-weeks' illness, relays of girls used to be sent up to my house every hour, to fan and keep off flies, etc. Every afternoon I used to spend two hours in the sea, with the whole Alipati family; and life on the whole would have been most pleasant, if I had had anything to eat or drink. But my stores were finished long before leaving the island, and no ships visited that happy land at that time.

Rotumah is celebrated for the extreme richness of its soil; the fine quality of the mats the women make; the size of its cocoa-nuts; and the value of its natives as seamen. Its weapons, of which there are none left now, used to resemble those of Samoa in shape and ornamentation.

The island was once described as "the garden of the Pacific." It abounds with pigeons and other birds, and

has one species of small red honeysucker peculiar to itself. Dr. Finsch, the celebrated ornithologist, is my authority for this fact. As is often the case, I did not know it until years after I had said good-bye to Rotumah for ever.

There are some very curious caves in the island, many of which I explored. But cave exploring, unless one has been brought up to it, is at times painful work. The only entrance to one of these is down a long chimney, which slants into the bowels of the earth at an angle of about forty-five degrees. After rubbing the skin off my hands and knees to no purpose, I stuck fast between two rocks for some time, and had to be hauled out by a rope. After this I gave up caves, as I considered that it required some one smaller than myself to explore them thoroughly.

It requires considerable confidence in one's self to enter some of the caves which are to be met with in the Pacific. At Vavou, in Tonga, there is a cave which Byron has written about in "The Island," to which the entrance is six feet under water. After entering the passage, down which you have to swim at a considerable angle, it takes a sharp turn, and when you come up, you are in the cave. But the whole dive occupies nearly a minute of time—a long time under water for a European,—and if you come up too quickly you cut yourself horribly against the sharp coral ceiling of the passage.

The old war dances of the natives of Rotumah are

very extraordinary. I revived one, with much trouble, and all the people set to work to make the old dresses and helmets; but they would not make clubs and spears, and, instead, they made use of a most extraordinary collection of firearms. It included everything, from a flint-lock to a snider rifle; whale guns, muskets of all sorts were brought out, and two or three loads of powder put in each. On the top of the powder damp clay was beaten in, the object of the exhibition being to make as much noise as possible. Several of the more primitive guns burst, but it all helped to make a noise.

After the dance came wrestling, a practice which had been given up for many years; and after that I tried to make them jump and run races; but they all wanted prizes, so that part of the entertainment was hardly a success.

The island has two fairly good harbours, one for the south-east season, and the other for the north-west. Several ships have been wrecked off its coasts of late years. In former days it used to be a great resort for whaling ships; but the whales have gone to other parts, and the whale ships have followed them. It is unfortunately well in the track of hurricanes. When one does pass over the island the natives take to the caves, as no other place is safe.

The only other island I shall mention here is Wallis Island.* This island, though not belonging to France,

* A fuller account of Rotumah and Wallis Island, and of some

is to all intents and purposes French. It is completely under the control of the French priests. I was much surprised, on anchoring there, to find the ship taken possession of by a guard of natives, who for some time would neither allow us to land, nor allow canoes to come off to us. After some little discussion, during which the advisability of throwing our guard into the sea was suggested, I determined to land, and, accordingly, in spite of protests and attempts to prevent us, a boat was lowered, and some of us went ashore. I went up to the priest's house, and he told me he knew nothing of what had been done, though it was in fact done by his orders. After a rather stormy conversation, I said I should complain to the queen of the island, which threat seemed to bring the priest to his bearings. The queen, I knew, was a very autocratic lady, and was jealous of the power the priests had over her people.

Before I left, the queen and I became great friends; and she revenged herself on this priest in a somewhat peculiar manner. He was very fond of his native brandy, and not unfrequently took too much; so one day while I was there she sent some men to his house, and had all his brandy seized, saying, that if her subjects were to be flogged for getting drunk, as they often were, she would not let him set them the example.

curious adventures I had there in the years 1879 and 1880, has already been published by Messrs. Longmans & Co., under the title "A True Story of the Western Pacific."

I never saw so priest-ridden a place. Two-thirds of the population were constantly working for the priests, building churches which were not wanted, as they already had more than they could use, and convents for the five sisters. There was one pretty little Irish girl among these sisters, and I believe I offended the priest mortally, by asking her to a pic-nic I gave, though what harm there was in my doing so I fail to see to this day.

I often used to wonder that these priests were not killed.

The queen, I could see, did not like the priests, and when I told her that they had gone so far as to *tabu* me, and forbid any native to hold any communication with me, her majesty grew very angry. I told her it was not of the slightest consequence, as I could get any native in the place to speak to me if I wished, in spite of the *tabu*. The priests said I had come in a devil-ship. The queen showed her resentment by providing a big feast for me.

The natives of Wallis Island are much like the Samoans in appearance and language, and probably came from Samoa, as the distance between the two places is not more than three hundred miles. They try to escape at any cost from their island. Every ship that goes finds several canoes waiting outside the reef for her, though the natives know that, if they cannot get on board, a certain flogging awaits them on their return for having made the attempt.

The great natural curiosity of Wallis Island is a lake, situated six miles from the coast. It is evidently an old crater of great size, half full of water. It must have subterranean communication with the sea, as it rises and falls with the tides. I found its banks to be the home of numbers of wild pigs, and perhaps my presence in the island was made more acceptable by my shooting a great many of them.

The roads, in any weather, are quite excellent. One can gallop from one end of the island to the other, if one chooses.

The men are great fishermen, and on special occasions they join all the nets in the island together, to form a barricade from the beach to the reef. Miles of water are then beaten, and the result is that about ten times as many fish are caught as the whole population could eat.

On the whole, Wallis Island is a pleasant place to stay a short time in; but how much pleasanter it would be if it were not for the priests!

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO SMALL BRITISH POSSESSIONS.

It may not be uninteresting to give a short chapter to Thursday Island and Norfolk Island, though neither of them can, properly speaking, be included among the Western Pacific Islands. Both, as the reader is doubtless aware, are British possessions, the one forming part of the Colony of Queensland, while the other is a dependency of New South Wales. Still, as Thursday Island is the home of many natives from every quarter of the Pacific, and as Norfolk Island is the seat of the Melanesian Mission, to which I have several times made allusion, it may not, perhaps, be out of place to say something about these two places.

Thursday Island is the head-quarters of the Torres Straits pearl-shell fishery, and a place of much importance, not only from the large income obtained from this industry, but from the number of white men and natives to whom it gives employment.

In former years, when it was a place very little known, and but very few ships ventured through the

almost unsurveyed waters of Torres Straits, the early settlers made considerable fortunes. They had the place to themselves; there were no settlers on the mainland of Australia; there were no grog shops, no magistrate, and they went quietly about their work, and realized large profits.

The diving, in those days, was carried on in a very rudimentary manner. The few natives who had been collected, many of them Australian "black fellows," used to go down with a heavy stone on their feet, which they slipped on reaching the bottom. It was considered good diving to stay down a minute and a half in five fathoms. Shell was plentiful, however, and money was made rapidly. One wonders what the result would have been if any enterprising man had provided himself then with all the modern appliances of diving-dress and air-pumps.

In those days, too, an occasional pearl of great value would be found, and instead of being one of the perquisites of the diver or trader, as it is now, would go to its proper owner the master sheller. However, it was not to be supposed that a lucrative trade would remain long unnoticed, and by degrees more settlers came to the straits; new appliances were used; a police magistrate was sent there, and Thursday Island, as the whole settlement is called, became the flourishing community it now is. The straits were properly surveyed, and now several lines of steamers run through them, making Thursday Island a port of call.

The appearance of the settlement, from the police magistrate's house, is certainly very pretty. Small and large islands are visible everywhere, and on them the houses, some of them very large and comfortable, of the master shellers. The little town on Thursday Island itself is, however, not so agreeable. It is composed chiefly of stores and grog shanties. There seem to be no regulations here against supplying the natives with drink. It is impossible to walk along the only street without seeing many of them speechlessly, some violently, drunk. Not that this condition is confined by any means to the natives alone. I have always noticed that, starting from Brisbane to go north, along the Queensland coast, the amount of drink consumed seems to increase largely, till it reaches the maximum at Thursday Island. However, if they drink a good deal there, they can stand a good deal. To an Englishman it is a somewhat curious experience to be stopped in the street by a perfect stranger, and almost dragged into some grog shop to drink, at all hours of the day.

There are, however, some very pleasant people in Thursday Island, whose business makes it necessary for them to live there; and there are also a considerable number of strangers waiting for their various steamers, who help to make life agreeable to a certain extent. But as a place of residence, I have only heard of one man selecting it without any obligation to go there. This gentleman, after making a fortune by a new reef he discovered, after selling his business, and

realizing his money, found that the larger Australian towns did not suit him. So he returned to the scene of his former triumphs, and drank himself to death. The common accusation against the Colonials, that they make their fortunes in Australia to spend them in England, could not be brought against this gentleman.

The boats employed for the pearl-shell trade are models of what boats should be. They are most of them built in Sydney, and range from five to twelve tons. As a rule, no white man is allowed to go out in them while they are fishing. The natives are splendid boatmen, and have little to learn from white men in this respect. The native diver is the captain, and one feels almost overcome with admiration and envy at seeing one of these magnificent swells walking down the solitary thoroughfare. The deference and respect he meets with; the anxiety displayed on every hand to have at least a share in making him drunk, and the care with which he is tended, when no longer capable of looking after himself, all cause the astonished spectator, who perhaps sees the intercourse between white men and natives for the first time, to say to himself, "Where is that pride of race, and that contempt for the coloured man, of which I have heard so much?"

The answer is a very simple one. Good divers, that is to say, men who can stay down many hours in fifteen fathoms, are scarce, and are most eagerly sought after by the master shellers. Inducements of every sort are offered them to change their masters, at the

expiration of the term for which they have engaged. The wages they get are enormous—as much, I believe, as twenty pounds a month, and a heavy "lay" on every ton they bring up. When sober, these men are very good fellows, but when drunk they are the most foul-mouthed objectionable brutes I know.

The boats go out for from ten days to a fortnight at a time, well supplied with food and spirits. In fact, the length of time they stay out is regulated by the time the grog lasts. It is a common thing for a diver to go down three parts drunk. The dress is supposed to have a very sobering effect.

At every station there is a store kept, where the hands employed spend a good deal of their wages, and that at a price which makes up to the storekeeper, to a very large extent, for the high wages he has to pay. But when a diver has been working for eight months or a year, he usually wishes to make a trip to Sydney, to spend his money. Perhaps, after all deductions have been made from his earnings, he may still have three or four hundred pounds to spend. A party is made up; some five or six start off together. But they are not allowed to go alone; they are too valuable for that. A "shepherd," as he is called, goes with them. His duty is never to lose sight of his flock; to induce them to spend their money as quickly as possible, and, when it is finished, to make them large advances, so as to get them into his debt and power again. It is unnecessary to inquire how the money is spent; but

there is a certain quarter in Sydney devoted to these men, and it is not difficult to imagine what the principal source of expenditure is. In a month or six weeks the money is all gone, their passages back to Thursday Island are taken, and they are got on board with great difficulty, followed by their flashily dressed companions, who indulge in much genuine grief on their departure. The principal jeweller in Sydney has assured me that it is in this quarter of the town that the dealers buy many valuable pearls, from the low women to whom they have been given.

Sometimes the diver takes a white wife back with him, and on his return he is the object of much envy and admiration to his brethren.

I must say I have a grudge against the shepherds, for one of them decoyed away from me, in Sydney, the best servant I ever had, or am likely to get. He was a half-caste Maori and Fijian, and had the most wonderful talent for picking up a native language in a few days, of any man I ever knew. He was immensely useful in many ways. As a cook and washerman he could have made his fortune, and as a boatman he was unrivalled. However, one day he had disappeared; but he sent me a letter, saying that he had resisted for two months, but finally succumbed to the high wages offered him.

The best pearl I ever saw, was in the possession of a celebrated diver who was a shipmate of mine from Thursday Island to Brisbane. He was offered

on board the ship two hundred pounds for it, which could not have been a third of its value. But he refused every offer, as he had just been paid off, and had plenty of money. I felt sure it would go the way of all pearls when his money was finished, and accordingly I informed a Sydney jeweller of it, and where he could see it. When I was in Sydney a few weeks later I made inquiries about it, and the jeweller told me that it was the finest pear-shaped pearl he had ever seen, but that it was unsalable at its proper value in Australia, and he therefore had made no attempt to buy it.

These fine pearls are, of course, only met with once in the course of years. The master sheller never gets them. When the "fish" are sent up to the boat by the diver they are opened at once, and the pearls, if any are found, belong to the trader—that is to say, the man who superintends the working of the air-pump, and the diver's cord of communication.

A fine trade might be started in Thursday Island, by any enterprising individual who chose to buy up all the bad and indifferent pearls he could find, and send them there for sale. The passengers, who come through weekly, in the steamboats, are all on the look-out for pearls, and whenever a public-house keeper, or any one else has a pearl for sale, the most absurd prices are paid. Seed pearls, the price of which in the trade is, I believe, about fifteen shillings an ounce, are bought for as many

pounds; and it is by no means certain that the imitation article has not already found its way there. There seems to be in every part of the world a reckless desire, on the part of travellers by steamer, to buy worthless things at fabulous prices. There was a story told by a colleague of mine in Fiji, in the days when the steamers from Sydney to San Francisco used to meet the steamers coming the other way, in Kandavu. For some days before their expected arrival the natives would collect dead shells off the beach, broken pieces of coral, and other things of which tons could have been picked up in a day. When they were asked the reason for this, the answer was, "Oh damned fool, steamboat passenger, he buy him;" and on the arrival of the ships the steamboat passenger amply proved that he deserved this appellation.

It was said, in those days, that Fijian ethnological specimens could be bought far cheaper at Jamrach's in the East End of London, than they could at the two curiosity shops boasted of by Levuka; and, in later days, the sale of cannibal forks, and such-like curiosities made on the premises, used to be much encouraged by those gentlemen who visited Levuka for three weeks, and returned with materials for a quarto-book of travels.

To return to Thursday Island: I once saw a diver there who, on being paid off, exhibited traits of generosity which I was hardly prepared for. He had to receive some four hundred pounds for nearly a year's

work. On receiving the money, his master informed the gentleman before whom he was paid, that the man had an old mother in Singapore, and that, as she was ill and nearly starving, her son was anxious about her, and wished, as a dutiful son should, to remit her some money. "All right," said Mr. C——. "How much?"—supposing that this rich man would send at least a hundred pounds to his afflicted parent.

After some deliberation he said, "I think five dollar plenty." He was at last induced to make it ten, but remarked, on handing over the money, "I think me fool;" and then, as an afterthought, added, "My word! that fellow" (meaning his mother) "get drunk now." Doubtless he knew his mother's tastes better than any one else, and thought that he was equal to doing all the drinking for the family.

The fishery extends to the coast of New Guinea. There have been, now and then, collisions between boats' crews and the New Guinea natives.

The expenses connected with a diving establishment are great, and nowadays the profits are not so large as they used to be. The divers every year have to go further and further afield to find shell. As the shallow waters are worked out round about Thursday Island, the best divers, who can stay under in depths which are impossible to an ordinary man, can command almost any wages.

White men are useless, except in shallow water. It is because the natives have driven the white men

out of the field that they are treated with such deference. A white man, it would appear, cannot stay under so long as the natives, nor can he dive in such great depths as they can. Moreover, he does not care about putting his hands into the numerous holes in the coral, as the marine monsters who inhabit these depths are often unpleasant customers. There are, I believe, a few white men who are diving on their own account, and doing an indifferent business.

The native who has spent much time at Thursday Island, as a rule does not care about going home again. He cannot earn big wages, nor can he get the grog he is so passionately fond of, in the island he comes from. Some do, however, find their way back, and it would be better for all parties if they had stayed away.

They disregard the authority of the chiefs they once were afraid of; they are overbearing to the white men, and make others so, and are the cause of endless disturbances. They very soon get a following, and they are altogether very much like the young man we read so much of in the novels of the present day, who leaves his unsophisticated family, and quiet abode in the country, etc., and returns by-and-by to overwhelm them with his smart London ways. The natives have, however, a wholesome fear of the energetic police magistrate in Thursday Island. He is one of the few people there who do not look upon them as the lords of creation, and the noble savage who treats his master in so supercilious a manner is, in the presence of

Mr. Chester, as meek as a lamb, nor would it be supposed that butter would melt in his mouth.

However, interesting place as it is, enough has been said of Thursday Island. I have only mentioned it in order to show how the South Sea Islander can change with prosperity, and in circumstances where he can practise such European vices as are denied him in his own home. His island suffers by his departure, and does not gain by his return.

I shall be glad to see the time when, as in other places, regulations are made in Thursday Island, prohibiting the sale of spirits to natives.

The story of Norfolk Island has been too often told to need repetition. The island itself, however, is one of the most interesting places I have visited. Its park-like appearance, with the magnificent Norfolk Island pines scattered here and there; the smooth turf, which looks as if it was as carefully kept as a lawn at home; and the general outline of the hills, all combine to make it one of the most picturesque spots on the face of the earth.

On landing—a service of some danger, as the coast is "steep to" all round—you are welcomed in the warmest manner, ponies are put at your disposal—rather deficient in saddles and bridles, it must be admitted,—and the usual thing to do is to scamper up and down hill in as reckless a manner as you may feel inclined.

Norfolk Island is the head-quarters of the Melanesian Mission, an excellent institution, and one which works

well. The system adopted by it is this: the mission yearly brings a certain number of native children to Norfolk Island to be educated, and yearly sends out to other islands a certain number of native teachers. These men are taught quite as much as it is necessary that they should know, and, on their return, when educated, to their own islands, exercise a vast amount of influence over their fellow natives. Whether they make many converts to Christianity I do not know, but the fact that they exercise an influence over their people which in many places makes it safe for a white man to live among them, is at any rate a great practical gain. Missionaries, of whatever denomination they may be, have always been the pioneers of civilization throughout the Pacific, but the field of the Melanesian Mission's operations is chiefly confined to the two groups of the New Hebrides and Solomons. Any one who is acquainted with the natives of these two groups will readily understand from this that the difficulties in the path of the mission must be immense.

The mission establishment with its beautiful church is the first object to be visited after landing on Norfolk Island; and after seeing it, the visitor rides off to see the old barracks and prison of the convict days. The barracks are still a fine stone building, but the prison is in ruins. Some idea, however, can be obtained from the ruins as to the nature of the confinement which the convicts used to undergo.

The burial ground is by no means the least interesting

part of the prison grounds. Numerous inscriptions, such as "Barbarously murdered while in the execution of his duty," are to be found.

The whole place, however, has been allowed to go into decay. As the old penal settlement here forms an important feature in the history of New South Wales, it seems a pity that this should be the case; but perhaps it is intended that all that relates to the former convict days should be forgotten.

There is, or was once, a good Government House on the island, intended for the governor of New South Wales, but it is never used. This also is a pity, for there are few pleasanter spots in the world in which to spend a short holiday than Norfolk Island.

Certainly, of all places in Her Majesty's dominions there is none more loyal. The invariable question put to the stranger on landing is, "How do you do, sir? How is Her Majesty?" I had the good luck to spend the anniversary of the Queen's birthday of 1883 on the island. A magnificent dinner was provided by Mr. Nobbs, junior, the magistrate. By the way, his post is so far a sinecure that in these happy days there is no crime on the island. He seemed quite undismayed by the large number of officers of H.M.S. *Nelson* who turned up; and as there was only one table, the guests divided themselves into three parties, and when one lot had finished the next sat down. I am sure there would have been enough for six parties.

In this happy land money is a product of civilization

which is to a great extent dispensed with, but the people seem to get on very well without it. They get their letters once every two or three months, and don't seem to care to get them oftener. In the winter time the men, who are fine boatmen, kill a few whales. On the whole, I do not think that I ever saw a more cheerful community than that established on Norfolk Island.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD LABOUR TRADE.

THE old labour trade, as it is commonly called, or "blackbirding," as some people termed it, is nominally a thing of the past. Of the present labour trade I have nothing whatever to say. It is conducted under the supervision of the Queensland and Fijian Governments; and the regulations which have been framed to control it, if properly carried out, leave nothing to be desired.

The old labour trade was carried on for the purpose of recruiting islanders, as much for Tahiti, Samoa, Raratonga, and other places, where English and American planters had settled, as for Fiji and Queensland. Such regulations as were formed in Fiji for the protection of the islanders, before that country was annexed to Great Britain, were of the vaguest possible nature, and I do not suppose there were any regulations on the subject issued at all in the islands of Eastern Polynesia.

Of the trade which preceded the old labour trade—

namely, what was called the sandal-wood trade—I do not propose to say much. It died a natural death many years ago, partly because the coast supply of sandal-wood was exhausted, and partly on account of law and order being gradually introduced into the Pacific. The trade, too, only embraced the New Hebrides and parts of the Solomon Islands, and did not extend to the Line Islands and many other groups which were visited by the labour ships. Most of the "old hands" of the sandal-wood trade are either dead or else they have gone to more congenial climes, though where they may be I know not, now that the Pacific, that former Eldorado for bad characters, has been brought under civilized law. There are stories still told, of the truth of which I know nothing, as to the lawless character of the men engaged in that trade, and the brutal massacres which frequently took place. That the trade was a very ill-regulated and lawless one there is no doubt, but no one was ever brought to justice for excesses committed by those engaged in it; and, indeed, but very little was ever heard of what they did. I do not know of any court at that time in which they could have been tried, and, at all events, it was no one's business to stir up dirty water. While the trade lasted, it was very profitable. Hoop iron and glass bottles were accepted there by natives who now require breech-loading rifles and military uniforms of the most gorgeous nature. But it all happened so long ago, that but few traditions of the trade are left us. The last

of the sandal-wood traders removed himself, and his wives and his idols, some twenty years ago, from the scene of his former labours.

The number of white men left in the Pacific who can go back twenty years is very small. Some there are in Fiji who could tell curious tales, were they so minded; but they have become very, very respectable. There used to be two men in Fiji who had been there about forty years, but they were not given to speaking of themselves.

The memory of the sandal-wood trade has died out among the natives. It belonged to a former generation, and the events which have since taken place have been so novel and exciting, that no room is left in their minds for what they doubtless look upon now as traditions of the remote past. In those days the demand for labour did not exist, as there were no plantations in Queensland or Fiji. Some few there may have been in the Sandwich and Society groups, but their owners sought for labour nearer home. I have questioned New Hebrides natives about the sandal-wood trade, and some few old men say, "Yes, the white men's ships came when we were young men." But, beyond that, nothing can be elicited.

Whatever excesses may have been committed, it may be a satisfaction to some people to know that the trade was conducted chiefly by Americans. There was no necessity for Australian ships to engage in it, as Queensland then produced, as it still does, plenty of sandal-

wood. The principal market was San Francisco, but I suppose the wood was there reshipped to China.

After all, the public owe the sandal-wood traders something. The greater part of the magnificent collection of ethnological specimens in the Christy Museum must have been bought, in the first instance, by them. In this collection there are clubs, spears, dresses, etc., which are never seen now, and which no amount of tobacco and tomahawks would buy. Doubtless, a New Hebrides native of the present day, if introduced into the Christy Museum, would not recognize the weapons of his forefathers. In the New Hebrides, as in many more civilized countries, there are many lost arts, and we have to thank the sandal-wood traders for the specimens we have secured, while those arts were still in practice.

To return to the labour trade: the two events which gave the greatest impetus to it, were the discovery of suitable land for sugar-planting at Mackay in Queensland, and the American war. Though these two events seem to have but little connection with each other (nor have they, except insomuch as they influenced the trade in Queensland and Fiji), still they both were the cause of creating a demand for labour. The American war, which was concluded some years, I think, before the introduction of sugar at Mackay, as every one knows nearly put a stop to the export of cotton from Charleston and New Orleans. Cotton from Fiji, and other South Sea Islands, at once took its place; and every

white man in the Pacific who had a few acres to plant, at once sowed cotton. It was supposed that boundless wealth was to be acquired, and if the war had continued a year longer some pretty fair fortunes would no doubt have been the result. But the season of prosperity only lasted one year, and, although considerable profits were made during that period, every succeeding year only brought loss. Every one was planting, and the demand for foreign labour was considerable. Accordingly, ships were fitted out to go to the New Hebrides, which was the group nearest the Fiji; and the profits of these ships in procuring labour must have paid their owners far better than growing cotton paid the planters.

Till great competition came into the field, there is no reason to suspect the masters of these ships of being guilty of any very iniquitous practices. They had new fields, or very nearly so, to work; and the natives then, especially the young men, who wished to see the world, crowded on board, each man clamouring to be taken. Of a certainty no objections were made, and often a ship had only to call at one place, to fill up, and return after a fortnight's or three weeks' absence. Several trips might easily be made in the season, and there was no fear of a ship returning without a very full complement of natives. Those were not the days of ships being limited to carry a fixed number of natives. A fifty-ton vessel would return with one hundred and fifty or two hundred natives on board, and many horrible stories have been told of the overcrowding that went

on. One story there was of a ship getting into bad weather, and having to shut a hundred or more natives into the hold with the hatches on, and how, after two days of this confinement, on the hatches being taken off, many were found to be dead.

The trade was very brisk at first; the New Hebrides were to all intents and purposes a new field, as the ships from Eastern Polynesia did not go so far from home.

There was no supervision over the manner in which the natives were recruited, and no questions of any sort were asked. Men were wanted quickly, and men were obtained quickly. It is to be doubted whether the curiosity of the New Hebrides natives, in their desire to see the world, was satisfied in a manner quite agreeable to themselves. The country they were taken to must have been very much like their own, and no doubt they considered the exchange of an idle life, for one of hard work in the plantations, a heavy price to pay for their fancy. But still they went, for as yet no men had been returned to their homes to relate their experiences; nor was it very likely under the *régime* then existing in Fiji, that any would be sent back. Once there, like many natives in New Caledonia at the present day, there was no chance of their getting home again.

The wages paid them were a mere nothing, but they were fed as well as the resources of the station they happened to be on admitted of. The work required by them in the cotton plantations was not so hard as what

they had subsequently to endure, but, to men who had never worked in their lives, it was sufficiently severe. Many of them died of home-sickness—a very common cause of death among New Hebrides natives. I do not cite this last fact in any endeavour to show that they were in any way ill treated after their arrival in Fiji. I never heard of any dying from ill treatment, but home-sickness is so common a form of death even in the present day, when the condition of native labourers is infinitely better than it was in the days of which I am speaking, that it is worthy of notice. A native, after he has made up his mind that he must die, is quite determined to do so, and no kindness, except the one which is never offered to him, namely, to send him home again, will turn him from his purpose. He does not refuse to eat, but he will get thinner and weaker day by day till he actually does die. When he is in this state he seldom makes any complaint, or indeed opens his lips at all, except to say that he wishes to go home. That is, in fact, the only way to cure him—to send him home.

When it was discovered how suitable the country at Mackay was for sugar, the land was rapidly taken up, and much capital was at once invested in sugar plantations. This necessitated a fresh supply of labour for the cane-fields; and of course the Western Pacific Islands being the nearest place where it could be obtained, many ships were fitted out in Queensland for the labour trade.

Then the work began in earnest, when a competition was established between Queensland, Fiji, and the Eastern Polynesian Islands. New Caledonia also came into the field to a small extent; and of all these countries she was the best situated for the trade. Forming actually one of the group of the New Hebrides, her ships had not so far to go, and were, moreover, better supplied with interpreters. In spite of this the French were never popular among the natives. What the reason for this dislike may be I am at a loss to imagine. Certainly, at the time I am writing of, the English must have treated the natives quite as badly as any Frenchman could do.

The artifices employed by the masters of Fijian and Queensland ships to obtain labourers were worthy of a better cause. They each had their haunts on the different groups, and each contrived to inspire the natives of these places with hatred for their rivals. A Fiji ship's captain would exhaust his powers of imagination to tell his set of natives horrible stories of what would happen to them if they went to Queensland: how they would be worked to death; how the climate would kill them; how they would never come back; how they might even be eaten by the ferocious white men who inhabited that country. Nor were the Queenslanders behindhand with their natives. They told them much the same stories about Fiji: how the natives there were the most savage in the world, and the white men not much better. As to

the ships from other places, neither Fijian nor Queensland captains bothered themselves much.

The result was that the New Hebrides and Solomons were divided into parties—one Queensland, and the other Fijian. This gave rise to curious complications, as the rival ships, not satisfied with their own beats, used to poach in each other's preserves. When two ships met, the crews used to turn out on the beach and fight it out, while the natives looked on in amazement.

They all felt it a personal matter, for every man in the crews had an interest in the venture; that is to say, he would be paid a certain sum of money for every native he procured. The party that were beaten had to leave the place in the possession of the other ship, and seek for new ground.

The natives, after a time, got into the habit of receiving one ship as friends and the other as enemies. But it was easy to overcome this difficulty. A ship going into a new place, and seeing no other ship there, would be uncertain whether the natives were friends of Queensland or Fiji. But they were prepared for either emergency. The natives would paddle out to meet them, and their first question would be, "Where shippy come?" If a Fiji ship, they would reply, "Fiji." And if the natives took the side of Fiji it would be all right. But if, in reply to "Fiji," the natives paddled off as hard as they could, and said, "Fiji no good man; too muchey work, Fiji," the crew would not waste time

in going ashore, to be in all probability attacked, in trying to persuade the natives to go with them: instead of that, they would put to sea at once till they were out of sight of land; then they would alter the appearance of the ship as much as possible. Perhaps they would send down the top-masts, and whitewash the sides; and then, two days later, back they would come again, looking like another ship. Out would come the natives: "Where shippy come?" "Queensland," this time would be the answer; and perhaps they would fill her up at that place, and not have to go anywhere else. The natives would be very much disgusted when they found that they were landed in Fiji instead of Queensland, though no doubt they found out pretty soon that the natives were not quite so savage, even in those days, nor the white men so terrible, as had been represented to them by their Queensland friends.

This was a very common dodge, and the amount of trouble it gave rise to was immense. Queensland had a good deal of leeway to make up, as Fiji was first in the field; but she buckled to in a noble manner, and very soon the "You go make sugar"-party was as big as "You go make cotton" one.

Queensland had more ships at that time than Fiji could boast of, and most of them were much larger, and took the native fancy more; but many a Queensland ship has had to pretend that Fiji was its ultimate destination in order to tempt the native away. I don't suppose that the authorities in Queensland knew of all

that was going on. There were many cases of canoes having been caught at some distance from the land, and run down either by the ship or the boats, after which the natives would be picked up and taken on board.

The recruiter was the great man in the old Fiji ships. Some recruiters made great reputations in this way, and their services were eagerly sought after by the captains of the ships. Their success consisted, first, in not being in the least afraid of the natives; and secondly, in being full of all sorts of tricks to attract their attention. One of the most celebrated of these recruiters I used to know very well. He had settled down, after the abolition of the trade, as a trader in Futuna, and he used to employ the same tricks there, to entice the natives into his store, as those he had formerly used to get them into the boats. We were shipmates in a small schooner once, for three weeks; and though I am afraid he was rather an unprincipled gentleman, he used to make me laugh heartily at the account of some of his adventures. In places where he was well known, the natives would recognize him a long way off, as he used to wear an eccentric dress for their edification. This costume, from his description, must have resembled that worn by the Ku Klux Klan. A tall conical-shaped cardboard hat, and flowing calico robes, was the get-up, and his face was concealed by a black mask. Under his robes he had a waterproof bag, and he would occasionally refresh himself with

a bucketful of salt water, which he appeared to drink, but which in reality was poured into the bag.

The only object of all this was to collect the natives round him, and in places where they were accustomed to his eccentricities it was perfectly successful. After a considerable crowd had been got together, he always persuaded a good many to accompany him. It was not an uncommon thing for recruiters to have distinguishing marks, by which the natives would recognize them. The chief object of this was to make the natives feel sure that the ship was really a Fiji ship, and not a Queensland one.

R——, my informant, was the best known of the recruiters, and would persuade natives to go to Fiji, where every one else would fail. He always contrived to make them laugh, and keep them in a good temper; and many men would go on the impulse of the moment, which impulse they would probably regret many times before they reached their journey's end. R—— always objected to force being used, and would be no party to it. He said that it would damage his reputation amongst the natives; wherein he was certainly right. On several occasions, when it was suggested to run down canoes, he threatened to give up recruiting altogether should such a thing be done.

In places where he was not known to the natives he had to adopt other tactics. The tall hat and flowing robes would only have served to frighten them. Wherever smoke was seen near the shore, he used

to land by himself, and sit down on the beach. The boat would then be sent back to the ship with orders to pull in again as soon as a fair crowd of natives was assembled. He was perfectly well aware that, though no natives were visible, many of them were close at hand, watching him carefully. The smoke that he had observed was, in most cases, meant as an invitation to come ashore. For a time he would sit still, doing nothing. Then one of his favourite tricks was to get a stone, and produce a box of wax matches. He would, in the gravest manner in the world, light match after match till the box was finished. The effect was the same as waving a white handkerchief to an emu. The natives, impelled by irresistible curiosity, came closer and closer; at length a head was poked through the bushes, then another and another, till a crowd had assembled. Still my friend would take no notice of them, but go on lighting match after match. Wax matches, in those days, were new and strange things to the native mind; and the rapid and easy production of fire, to people accustomed only to the slow process of rubbing two sticks together, must have seemed wonderful in the extreme.

Then he would suddenly appear to notice their presence, and he would gravely shake hands all round. Perhaps after this he would walk for ten or twelve yards on his hands, which would make them laugh. When the boat arrived it would find him in the midst of a large crowd, roaring with laughter at the innumer-

able dodges he had got for amusing them. Sometimes, in a new place, nearly every one would go to the ship with him, and if more natives were wanted they would tell him to wait another day, and they would send to the bush, to bring down more. He used to tell me that he required high wages for his services, and that he got anything he asked for, and as much grog as he could drink; "but the work was hard, Mr. Romilly. I used to feel dead-beat at the end of a day's recruiting." He was a splendid conjurer and step-dancer. His conjuring was entirely sleight of hand, that was worthy of the Wizard of the North. He trusted a great deal to this accomplishment for amusing and astonishing the natives, and hardly ever went on shore without his square board for dancing on. He would execute the most scientific sand and clog dances, to as appreciative an audience as any London music-hall could produce. In fact, there was no end to his vagaries. Near a village he would swim out to sea for two or three hundred yards, and pretend to drown. The canoes would come out and pick him up, and take him on board the ship, where he would persuade the crews to remain. His plan was not to get natives by force, but to humbug them into going. "You only spoil your market and make them afraid of you by running down canoes," said he. "Now there is not a native in the New Hebrides who does not know me, and who would not be glad to see me."

The greatest compliment which could be paid him

was one he often received, when a native he had recruited would come up to him in Fiji, and say, "Jemmy, when you came my place, you think me —— fool; you too muchey gammon black fellow; my word!"

Jemmy would be delighted at this recognition of his skill. He told me he never had any fight with natives, and in fact usually went ashore unarmed. He trusted himself alone among them without the slightest fear, though he placed as much trust in his own power of amusing them, as in their peaceful intentions.

He has recognized the fact that there is now no opening for his talents in this profession, and he has left it. In his day, there was no better-known or better-liked man in the New Hebrides. His career had been a strange one; but as many men will recognize him from my description I will not enter into that. He used often to consult me as to what he could do for himself, and I advised him to try the Australian stage; for a better actor I never saw. Whether he has taken my advice or not I cannot say. "I never kidnapped a native in my life," he would say. "All the other ships did it, but never a ship I was on board." Many other recruiters used to try to follow his example, but they had not his talents, and their efforts were failures.

In his store at Futuna he used to employ his square board largely, to attract a crowd of natives, and would sometimes dance on his counter for them. In spite of

all this I think he found storekeeping a failure, and where he is now I do not know. In spite of the life he had led I am bound to say I became very fond of Jemmy, and should like to meet him again.

The other recruiters, as soon as they found that natives were becoming difficult to obtain, on account of the amount of competition, used to resort to many methods of enticing them off to the ship. It was becoming a difficult matter to run down canoes, as they gave ships and boats a wide berth. One recorded practice was to pretend to be a missionary ship. On the usual question being asked, "Where shippy come?" they would reply, "Missionary." Perhaps they would all pretend to sing a hymn very slowly, while the hatches would be left open, and several tins of biscuits would be put into the hold. By degrees the natives would come on board, and would be attracted by the biscuits in the hold. When a sufficient number were collected, the hatches would be clapped on, and the natives on deck bundled into the sea, and the ship would make sail immediately. Whether this was done often I do not know; but I know of one certain case, and it is said that it was not an uncommon trick.

Then, of course, till the natives became too cautious, it was easy to attract canoes alongside with offers of knives and tomahawks. A boat would be all ready for lowering, or would be actually lowered, and the men ready to jump into her. It would not then be a difficult feat to run down two or three canoes,

and capture the men. Two or three men would be ready with rifles on the ship's deck, and in case of the natives showing fight they would have been fired on.

It is useless to go through the list of dodges used for kidnapping natives, for kidnapping it certainly was. Over and over again natives of the New Hebrides have said to me, with a smile on their faces, "Oh, long time ago white man he steal me." With many of them all sense of injury has disappeared, but it is not to be supposed on that account that any good feeling between the white man and them has been the result. Very much the reverse. I think there are places in Espiritu Santo and Tanna, two famous islands for recruiting, where not even Jemmy could now go ashore and dance to them as he used to do.

The New Hebrides nowadays are getting very well known, and there is a small community of white men living in Havannah Harbour, in Sandwich Island. There are also a considerable number of French settlers and traders. The natives in many places are not to be trusted; there have been several white men murdered by them of late years.

The remarks I made as to the introduction of European diseases into the Solomon Islands, apply equally well to the New Hebrides. Natives of this group were taken to work as labourers long before the Solomons were tried. The Solomons were first visited for this purpose by Queensland ships; and of course Fiji ships followed in their course very rapidly,

when it was seen how successful the others were. There were no sanitary regulations in those days, and the ships which took the natives to Fiji were usually kept in a horribly filthy state. They were crowded to the greatest extent they admitted of, and the deaths on board were frequent. A ship, which nowadays would be licensed to carry fifty men, in those days would have carried four times that number, if they could be procured. Whatever promises might have been made to the natives, as to the length of time they would stay away from home, they were never fulfilled.

Many natives stayed on, working in Fiji without ever getting a chance of going home again. A few, however, were sent back, but very good care was taken that they should re-engage, and not be landed. This was how it was done. Either no register, or at best a very incomplete one was kept, as to the islands and towns each native came from. It might therefore be said to be really impossible to send them to their proper places. But they would go through the form of attempting to land them. It did not much matter where that farce might be performed, as the native, seeing that it was not his own place, showed every sign of terror when he was told he must land there, and, sooner than do so with the certainty of being tomahawked, he was only too glad to re-engage. But sometimes much worse cases happened. There are several instances I know of where natives, who, for some reason—old age, disease, or incapacity—were not

required again; they were thrown overboard fifty yards from shore, and had to swim to the beach. Then, according to the accounts of eyewitnesses, there was a short chase along the beach, and the wretched man was tomahawked. Of this, to my knowledge, there were several cases, and how many there may have been which I never heard of, it is impossible to say.

Many of the recruits were bush natives—not bush natives proper, but members of tribes living some ten or twelve miles from the beach.

In all probability these people had never been in a canoe, and had never looked at the coast from the sea, and they would certainly be unfamiliar with its outline. How would it be possible to land such men on the proper place, unless a careful register were kept? They could afford you no information themselves on the subject. The fact is, that when they were recruited, it was not intended that they should be returned to their homes.

I saw an instance of an Erromanga native being utterly unable to tell us where he wished to be landed. We sailed completely round the island, and must of necessity have passed his place. I finally landed him near the mission station, where he was quite safe. Possibly he would have been safe anywhere in Erromanga, but it would not have done to risk it.

In conclusion, it must be understood that this trade is a thing of the past. I have written about it because I believe it has influenced the characters of the present

generation of natives to a large extent; and because the atrocities which were frequently committed are not yet forgotten. I have rather gone out of my way to avoid mentioning the most glaring cases of atrocity which occurred, but they are well known to many people. The characters of both natives and whites have changed since those days, for the better let us hope among the whites, but among the natives I fear it must be said for the worse.

CHAPTER X.

WHITE MEN IN THE PACIFIC.

As we have seen to a small extent how some of the natives of the South Pacific live, and have noticed a few of their customs, it may be of interest to pay some small attention to the white men who share their islands with them. The study may be neither so interesting nor so profitable, but it has some points worthy of observation.

The good old race of beach-combers and "old hands" is rapidly dying out. It seems almost sad that there should be no sanctuary now for the class of man whose presence in the Australian colonies is considered undesirable.

Though there are still many savage islands where a man might hide away for the rest of his life, they are not the sort of place chosen by the old beach-comber. He far prefers such islands as Samoa, Rotumah, Futuna, Wallis Island, and semi-civilized places of that nature.

A few of the race are still left, very old men, who are tended by their children or grandchildren. Their

biographies would no doubt prove interesting, but they are reticent, or else their memories are short, and most of them have defeated my most skilful attempts at "pumping."

What really must have been a great blow to the beach-combers was the annexation of Fiji. Any form of civilized government there was calculated to disturb them greatly. Shortly after that event many of them migrated to Samoa, but two or three still remain in Fiji. It has always been very much the fashion, in default of better information, to call them escaped convicts from the Australian penal settlements. But escape from those settlements was not so easy as it is said to be from New Caledonia in the present day. From Norfolk Island, the best point from which to reach the islands, escape was, so far as human foresight and vigilance could make it, an impossibility. As a matter of fact, most of these men are, or were, sailors, who had run away from whalers or sandal-wood ships. They took leave for ever of their own race, and cast their lot in with the natives. Whether the natives were much benefited or not is doubtful. Their minds do not seem to have become much enlarged in consequence; but if they could not become white men, even of the "mean" sort, the white men could become natives, so far as dress, language, food, and mode of life went. They could even surpass the natives in some respects. Their domestic arrangements assumed vast proportions, and many of the native communities of the present day

have to thank these early settlers for some of the most worthless idle vagabonds among them. As a rule, with some notable exceptions however, these half-castes are a bad lot. They assume English names, but are looked down on by the whites. They are not respected by their relations on the mother's side, and, as it is not illegal to supply them with drink, they are an endless source of trouble. Their fathers resented extremely any white men coming to trade in their islands, and very often used to exert whatever influence they might possess over the natives, to make all dealings as difficult as possible.

One of these "old hands" in Rotumah used to have an occasional chat with me, and his bitter hatred against the traders, for no reason except that they had settled there without consulting him, was extraordinary. He was a man who might have been ninety years old, or a hundred and fifty,—he did not know himself; but that he had been to New South Wales in its earliest days, was certain from his conversation. He had lived in Rotumah for more than forty years, and had become so thoroughly a native, that he spoke English with the greatest difficulty. He did not include whalers in his sweeping condemnation of white men. The glorious days when whales abounded, and the whalers used to pay Rotumah frequent visits, were still fresh in his memory. Rum, according to him, was then as common as water; and the orgies he described, in which many of the natives joined, must indeed have afforded him

delicious recollections. The old ruffian used then to throw out a pretty strong hint that he had not forgotten the taste of spirits, and to loosen his tongue still further I would give him a pretty strong nip. The number of times he had been married was appalling, and his estimate of the female character was of the lowest possible character.

I am afraid old Jack must have been rather unkind to his wives on many occasions. Of his life, previous to his arrival on the island, he would tell me nothing. He said he had forgotten all that; but I have no doubt his career must have been an adventurous one. I suppose he is dead now. In spite of his immense age he was always able to walk to my house for a plug of the navy tobacco, which made him independent of his hated foes, the traders.

I used to meet many of these men at one time, but it is useless to describe any more of them, as old Jack is a very good type of the whole race. They are most of them so old that, whatever they may have been in former days, they are now almost harmless.

The younger beach-comber, of a more recent date, presents no special features of interest. He is merely an English savage of a low type. He acquires most of the bad points of the native character, while his superior knowledge enables him to cheat and defraud them, at the same time appearing to conform to their customs. It is not a subject of regret that the increase of trade and civilization will, in all probability, get rid of him too.

He has no occupation, as he is not trusted even by the smaller traders to help to extend their business.

Of the trading class of white men in the Pacific, of whom I shall principally speak, there is every degree, from the highly educated gentleman down to the man but one step removed from the beach-comber.

One gentleman, an intimate friend of mine, with whom I lived for some time, possesses, in one group where he resides for four months of every year, a house, which for comfort and all the little devices used in a tropical climate, could be beaten nowhere. He lives in the midst of a semi-savage population, and within a day's march of his house are to be found some of the wildest cannibals in the Pacific. He tells me that he has now added billiard tables and bowling alleys to his house. He keeps an establishment of some forty or fifty men, a cook, gardener, etc., about the place. Most of them are Chinamen, whom he brings from China for the purpose. His *chef* is a Frenchman; and in a hitherto almost unknown island he will give you a dinner, every night, which could not be equalled at any private house or club in Australia. Of course he has to depend on himself for everything, for neither the natives nor the islands are capable of producing many things necessary to his existence. Moreover, he is independent of Australia for nearly all his wants, as he runs ships direct to Europe. He also keeps a forty-ton racing yacht for short expeditions. He says, "If I have to live here for some months of the

year, I must be comfortable;" and he certainly understands comfort, and makes a science of it. He has another place in a northern group, which he tells me is still more comfortable. How that may be I do not know, but it is difficult to imagine such a paradise as that must be. This gentleman has an army of traders scattered over the Pacific, and maintains a very regular correspondence with them; and in all his dealings with natives, though somewhat severe at times, he is scrupulously just. He has done an immense amount of discovery and exploration, the details of which he keeps very much to himself. In fact, he is the principal trader and pioneer in the Pacific.

Most of the smaller traders settle down into a very comfortable existence. They make quite enough money to supply themselves with all their wants, and many of them are collectors of objects of natural history, or of botanical specimens, by which means they sometimes make considerable sums of money.

Perhaps the most unfortunate Europeans who ever visited the South Seas were the French colonists belonging to the Marquis de Rays' expedition to New Ireland, to which I have alluded in my first chapter. The marquis seems to have displayed an extraordinary ignorance of the country to which he was sending these poor people; but he nevertheless issued descriptions of it extravagant enough to induce them—they were mostly of the peasant class—to realize all the money

they could, and take their passages in the two ships chartered for the occasion. They were landed at Port Breton, as the new colony was to be called; and certainly the selection of such a spot for the colony was a very remarkable choice to make. It was very deficient in water, and the soil was of a sandy unfertile nature, which made agriculture impossible. It was, moreover, very nearly the only place of the like kind in the whole island. It is possible that there were no definite instructions as to where the expedition was to be landed, and that, Port Breton being the first land they would make coming from the southward, it was thought as good a place as any other. In this place, however, these wretched people were left without adequate supplies of either food, clothing, means of building houses, or of protecting themselves against the natives they might meet with. In one thing only were they fortunate—there was no powerful tribe of natives near them. If there had been, the scarcity of arms would have made it very difficult for them to have defended themselves against a sudden attack. The only natives they saw, were a few wandering tribes, almost as poor as themselves. The natives, however, could live in the bush, on wild food, which these Frenchmen could not do.

Before any account of their wretched plight could reach the few missionaries and white traders who lived at Blanche Bay, a hundred miles distant, starvation, disease, and dissension amongst themselves had made

their appearance. No medicines had been landed, and there seems to have been no medical man among them. Some died of fever, some of hunger; some got away in boats and were lost; and some who had no means of escape, or who would not desert their wives and daughters, remained where they were. It is said that the most degrading methods had to be adopted to obtain food from the few natives there were.

The landing, which had been performed with so much pomp, when the bishops had blessed the sea, and an image of the Marquis de Rays had been erected side by side with one of the Virgin Mary, resulted a few months afterwards in all this misery.

A newspaper was published in Marseilles, called *La Nouvelle France,* describing the affairs of the colony. This paper was made to appear as if it were published in the colony itself, yet, for some time after the survivors had been rescued, and when no human soul belonging to the expedition remained in the place, it still continued to describe the progress of agriculture, and the erection of mills there. According to *La Nouvelle France,* treaties had been made with great princes or sultans, among whom appears the name of Le Roi de Lamboumboum, who, to show his friendly feeling, was stated to have kissed the image of the Virgin, and that of Monsieur le Marquis de Rays. The monarch's name sounds somewhat suggestive of one of Offenbach's operas.

Many of these deluded people were Bretons, who put

as much trust in the name of the Marquis de Rays as they did in the accounts circulated of the richness of the land. The marquis is, I believe, of a good Breton family. Several of his dupes are now trading in New Britain for Mr. H——, who, with the missionaries, did all they could for them, on hearing of their starving condition. Altogether a more disgraceful scheme was never planned.

Many of the white men in the Pacific get over the difficulty they experience in obtaining spirits by making them for themselves. Those who have been in the Line Islands know the method from having learned it there, and other whites learn from them. The process is simple. Several good cocoa-nut trees are selected near the house for convenience, with slanting stems, and not too tall. This is merely to save a little trouble. Steps are cut in the tree, as it has to be ascended twice a day. The stout sheath which encloses the bunches of young nuts for the year is then bound tightly round and round with cord, from its base to its point. It is left thus one day, after which the cord is unwound for four or five inches from the sheath, and the uncovered part is cut off with a sharp knife. A cup is then hung underneath, to catch the juice which flows out. There will not be much of it at first, but after a week or two as much as a pint can be taken daily, from each sheath prepared in this manner. Every day a thin shaving has to be taken off, and the cord unwound as occasion may

require. This juice, when quite fresh, mixed with equal parts of water, and some fresh lime-juice added, makes a most excellent drink. It is too sweet and thick to drink pure. When fermented it becomes tremendously intoxicating, and it is in this condition that it is so acceptable to some white men. Very excellent molasses can be made by boiling down the pure juice, and the vinegar made from it is by no means bad.

Of course a tree thus treated can bear no cocoa-nuts, and very soon becomes sickly and dies, as it is its heart's blood which is drawn from it. There is one very important item in the manufacture of "tokalau toddy," as it is called, which I have purposely omitted to mention, for not quite all the white men know how to make it, and it is just as well that they should not find out. The natives in one group only, I think, know the secret. On them the effect of tokalau toddy is much the same as that of bang on the Malays. They frequently run amuck from its effects, and when in that condition are awkward customers to deal with. The taste of it in its fermented state is insufferably nasty, but I think some men would drink even methylated spirits sooner than have none. My friend old Jack was a great hand at manufacturing this toddy, and indeed there were few things made by natives that he could not make equally well.

I hardly know if one should include Chinamen among white men, but the natives make a very marked difference between them. It seems to be the Chinaman's

fate to be disliked wherever he goes, and the rule holds good in the Pacific.

Some of them, however, are very good fellows, and I never spent a more amusing evening in my life than I did once at a Chinaman's house at Samoa. He was about to be married to a native girl, and, on the eve of his wedding day, he gave a ball to celebrate the occasion. The ball was attended chiefly by white men and half-castes, but a few native women were there, gorgeous in silk dresses. I must say the supper provided for us was excellent. I devoted myself for the greater part of the evening to a beautiful half-caste lady, who was most elegantly arrayed in a long silk night-gown, and a straw hat which she never took off. But in this happy land she ran no risk of exciting unflattering remarks upon her conduct, as might have been the case at home. I believe most of the men there chose their partners for the evening, and took no others—a very sensible proceeding, as I thought. My partner at once rushed into conversation, in broken English—"My name Martha. What your name?" She was dissatisfied with my first name, but accepted the second, on being told that my friends never addressed me by it. She said it would be agreeable to know me by a name which she could consider her own property. "Come," I thought, "this is making the running." Her next remark was a startler. "Oh, dear!" she said, "give me a glass of lum" (rum). Though a beverage seldom seen at balls, the Chinese host knew the tastes of his

guests, and rum was provided in ample quantities. Martha seemed to enjoy hers, and she proposed a walk in the garden afterwards; but first she made me take a sip out of her glass.

Martha's affection, real or assumed (I fear the latter), now took a different turn. On reaching the garden she seemed not so much affected by the romantic nature of the situation as by a desire to annex my shirt-studs. "I beg of you your studs," she said. "Very bad manners gentleman refuse lady." I thought so too, and handed them over to her, when they were stowed away in a most business-like manner in the night-gown. I thought myself justified, after this, in making the conventional remark, "I suppose you like balls?" She replied promptly, "Yes. No like dance; like talk; gentleman make me present." I congratulated myself on having no further articles of value about me. Martha was clearly not a girl for penniless younger sons. But she had not finished yet; far from it. My straw hat, it seemed, fitted her exactly; and calmly remarking that it was a fine night, and no fear of rain, she appropriated that also.

I was now in a state of considerable apprehension, for all seemed to be fish that came to Martha's net. But her eye ran over me in an ogre-like manner, if such a simile should be used for so pretty a girl. "Those very good buttons," she said, pointing to some brass buttons on my jacket; "I beg you those buttons." This, at all events, was not a very costly present; and the buttons

went the way of the studs. I suppose she considered that any further spoliation would render me unfit to appear in public again, by which she would lose my society for the rest of the evening. So, after one more comprehensive survey, she said, "*Now* you give me glass of lum." After this, the chief business of the evening for her was over. She condescended to be conversational again, and really was most admirable company. She told me a little Samoan scandal about every one present, and Samoan scandal is no joke. What might be called the raciest of anecdotes, were related quite gravely as matters of course. She bore the intelligence that I sailed next morning with the most stoical indifference. I gave her this information suddenly, in a vain attempt to obtain some expression of regret, but it did not even gain me the "Oh, indeed!" or "Oh, really!" of more civilized life.

The whole entertainment was very amusing. No one got drunk, and the people seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly. I am afraid to say how many times I supplied Martha with rum, but it had no effect on her that I could see.

The crowning triumph of the evening was to see the friend with whom I had gone to the ball enter the room despoiled in an even more wholesale manner than I had been. His partner was also a half-caste. I believe he had gone so far as to beg for a lock of hair, but was told it was very bad manners. Some idea of doing the same had passed through my mind; but

I observed that Martha was fond of cocoa-nut oil, and I was not.

My friend and I congratulated each other, as we walked home, that anything was left us to walk home in; for I feel convinced that, if Martha had had any brothers at home of about my size, she would have begged of me my jacket and shirt.

I always look back on the Chinaman's ball as one of the most amusing experiences I ever had.

There are several very startling anecdotes told of white men in the Pacific. Some are almost too much so to make them worthy of repetition. I will venture, however, to repeat one of them, told of an "old hand" in Fiji, who used to employ a small cutter to carry natives from place to place, and used also to procure Fijian labour for such plantations as there were in those days. On one occasion tradition relates that he wandered farther than was advisable, or than he was accustomed to do, into the mountains of Fiji. (I forgot to say that he had a cork leg.) At length he got to a village, where the natives stopped him, and would neither allow him to advance nor return. He did not like their looks at all, and he was very much exercised in his mind at the sight of an oven, in an active state of preparation, outside the house he was in. However, his presence of mind did not desert him. He called for food, which was brought him, and, with a large crowd watching him, he began to eat heartily. Between every mouthful he struck his clasp-

knife so firmly into his cork leg that it stood upright in it. The natives watched these proceedings with intense astonishment, and were evidently much alarmed. When he had finished his meal he very deliberately unscrewed his leg, and composed himself to slumber. But this was too much for them; they rushed out of the house, and allowed him a clear passage to where his horse was. As he was riding off he saw some natives who still looked doubtfully at him; but he caught hold of his head, and looked so much as if he was going to unscrew that also, that they fled in terror.

This story was told me by a man who had sailed with the hero of it, and I have no doubt there is some truth in it.

Another man told me that he once escaped from the natives by swimming from one island to another in the Kingsmill Group. His store had been burned in the night, and while the house was burning, with him, as they supposed, inside, he strapped his revolver to his head, and got into the water. He was followed by a canoe after he had got a good start, but of course they soon caught him up. He fired five shots at them, in the water as he was, and hit two, after which they gave up the chase.

There is a story of two white men who, not long ago, lived for two months, out of sight of any land, on a reef on which their ship—a labour vessel—had been wrecked. All the boats had been stove in but

one, and in that one the other white men escaped. About eighty natives were also landed on the reef, no even part of which was ever uncovered even at low water. The two white men had to keep watch and watch all through the time they were there, to prevent the natives killing them. They built up a pile of loose coral, which reached above high-water mark, and on it erected a canvas house, to keep their stores in, and in which to live. When they were rescued they had only a few days' food and water left. One could collect endless stories of this description, but I will have mercy on my readers, and proceed.

The trader class in the Pacific has improved wonderfully in the last few years. The Germans, especially, are many of them well-educated young men, who are sent out from home, first to act as clerks in the big houses, and then to take charge of a station. They contrast strongly with many of our own traders. An English trader who could speak French, German, and English would be looked on as an extraordinary genius, yet nearly all the young Germans can do so.

The natives, oddly enough, will only learn English, and that in the roughest manner. German seems impossible for them, and French, even in New Caledonia, they scorn. The "man Oui oui," as they call the Frenchman, from his constantly using those words, is hardly considered a white man by them; that term is invariably reserved in native estimation for an Englishman or a German.

In Wallis Island a few speak good French; but then they have been taken to France.

Pages more might be written on the subject of white men in the Pacific, but I have said enough to show that in the Pacific, as elsewhere, there are all sorts and conditions of men. Perhaps, however, some of the types there are more curious than those which are to be met with in other places.

CHAPTER XI.

BULLY HAYES.

I SUPPOSE it has been the dream of most boys' lives to become a pirate. It certainly was of mine, though I was undecided whether I would not rather become a Jack Sheppard or a Dick Turpin. This was the result of a course of Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's literature, than whom among schoolboys no more popular author exists. The facility with which we used to ride from London to York, after the lights were put out, would have astonished the bold highwayman who was the hero of that feat. London was situated at one end of the long corridor out of which the dormitories opened, and York was at the other. About every two yards there was a most uncompromising turnpike gate, at each one of which Turpin had to engage in a battle with toll-keepers on account of his refusal to pay toll. He generally arrived at York in a much battered and exhausted condition, and, not unfrequently, if one of the masters caught him in the midst of his equestrian performance, he got a licking in the morning, an in-

dignity which the real hero would not have put up with without much bloodshed.

Though time has changed my opinions as to the advisability of emulating the exploits of Blackbeard and Sir Ralph the Rover, I can still read with much interest of the piratical doings of those gentlemen. I cannot say that I have ever been personally acquainted with a buccaneer, but I can boast that I know—or knew—the wife of one. I suppose that Bully Hayes, who for many years followed this profession in the Pacific, must be termed the last of the pirates, for the world is becoming too crowded and well known for him to find any successors.

Unlike the generality of his predecessors, he was able all his life to elude the law, which, at the time of his greatest successes, it must be confessed was not very strong in that part of the world; and he eventually met with his death from natural causes—that is to say, he was knocked on the head with a handspike by his cook.

There are many very wild stories in circulation about Hayes, and there is rather a tendency among many people to make a hero of him. A hero he certainly was not, of the good old Harrison Ainsworth type, for he was guilty of many mean and paltry thefts, as well as of daring wholesale robberies.

My information concerning him is derived from two gentlemen who both knew him intimately and had chartered his vessel on several occasions. One of them,

who is a clergyman, declares that he never wishes to have a more amusing or better-informed companion.

Hayes was the son of a bargeman on the Mississippi, and, up to the age of eighteen or so, worked with his father. I know nothing of his early training at that time, but it must have been, I should say, neglected, for one day he was found to be missing, and a sum of four thousand dollars was also missing from his father's strong box. A considerable interval of time elapsed here, during which I have had no opportunity of obtaining information as to his career. But some years later he was cruising about the Hervey Group, and carrying on a fairly legitimate trade. He had a small fifty-ton schooner, with a white mate and a native crew. How he had obtained possession of this schooner was a matter of surmise, but he had been seen at Singapore not long before this time, and a fifty-ton schooner had mysteriously disappeared from that port without the knowledge of her captain and owner.

The next place at which he appears is Samoa. Samoa at that time was not the place it is now, with sometimes five or six big ships in the harbour of Apia. Some members of the London Missionary Society were there, and they were anxious to go from Apia to the Herveys. There was no ship to be chartered but Bully Hayes' schooner, and that ship was accordingly taken. His character by this time must have been nearly formed, because bets were freely offered and taken as to the probability of this party ever reaching their

destination. Mr. C——, however, put faith in the assurances of Hayes, and, as it turned out, he was justified to a certain extent. Some two or three hundred pounds' worth of goods were sent on board, most of them the property of the society, but about sixty pounds' worth belonging to Mr. C——. Hayes made the most solemn promises that he would do everything in his power to make his passengers comfortable, and they started. On reaching the Herveys Mr. C——'s goods were landed, but none of the society's property was to be seen. Hayes swore by all his gods that it had never come aboard, and some days afterwards he made sail. A few weeks later it was ascertained that the whole of the society's goods had been sold in another part of the group, and that a cargo of island produce had been taken on board as part payment.

It must be remembered that there were no magistrates or police at that time in the Herveys, and that it was quite impossible to search the ship, however strong Mr. C——'s suspicions may have been.

A year afterwards they met again, and Mr. C—— taxed Hayes with this audacious robbery. Hayes was a man who, if he did not admit, never denied a performance of this sort. "I promised to land your things safely," said he, "and I did so; what have you to complain of?"

In the course of this voyage Hayes showed some curious sides to his character. Mr. C—— told him

that they would like to have services on Sundays, and wished to know what were the most convenient hours. He said, "I guess this voyage is going to do me a great deal of good, Mr. C——, and don't you be afraid of making the service too long, as I wish to get as much of it as I can while I have the chance." On the first Sunday he was the only one of the ship's crew who made an appearance for service. "Just wait a moment, Mr. C——," said he, "I won't have any skulking." Mr. C—— tried to stop him, and said he would rather not have the men if they did not wish to come. "I don't care a curse," said Bully Hayes; "they are on board a missionary ship now, and so long as you're on board I guess they've got to reform." And with that he went forward with a rope's end, and drove the unwilling congregation aft.

Hayes was an enormously powerful man, and strictly temperate. One glass of beer would have the same effect on him as a bottle of whiskey would have had on most of his contemporaries. He had a supercargo on board, who shared in many of his ventures, but they separated after this voyage. The supercargo was a young man of a good and well-known family at home, who had joined Bully Hayes from a love of adventure. However, they had a quarrel, and Hayes battered him over the head with a bag containing two hundred and fifty dollars, after which he threw the bag into the sea, exclaiming that the dollars were not fit to keep after touching such a skunk as his supercargo.

He used to give way to the most violent fits of rage, which were not, however, long lived. While they lasted he was decidedly unsafe to approach, and his crew kept out of his way. On one occasion he lost his temper with his cook, and chased him round the deck, when the cook took to the main rigging. Hayes, in the choicest language, ordered him down; but the cook, who knew his peculiarities, said, "No, no, massa! you plenty angry now; by-and-by me see you laugh, me come down." In later years Hayes would have brought him down with a revolver.

Hayes was a man who was totally unable to open his lips without swearing. On the occasion of his voyage with the missionaries his mate was ordered aloft to look after some of the rigging, and, being a little sulky at the time, went up swearing audibly. "Come down, you skunk," roared Hayes. "Don't you know you're on board a missionary ship? Don't you go to church on Sunday? If there's any swearing to be done on board this ship, I guess I can do it all."

One of the most celebrated stories about him is one which I have every reason to believe true. At the time I am speaking of there was a poll-tax of ten pounds per head on every Chinaman landed in Victoria. Hayes, seeing here an opportunity for the exercise of his talents, went to China and took in a cargo for the islands. Besides this, he embarked as many Chinamen as he could carry.

On his arrival at Melbourne heads, he pumped his

ship half full of water—it is to be presumed that his cargo was not of a perishable nature,—and made a signal of distress. In a short time out came one of the Government steamers to communicate with Hayes, who said, "Never mind me: I'm sinking, but will try and get the ship in; but save the Chinamen." The Chinamen were accordingly saved; but, as soon as the steamer was out of sight, Hayes pumped his ship out again, and made sail for one of his island haunts. By this manœuvre he landed his Chinamen, all of whom had paid him their ten pounds in addition to their passage money.

The sequel to this story is that the merchant in Melbourne, to whom the ship was consigned, found himself in the position of having to pay the poll-tax on the Chinamen who had been landed; and that when Hayes, some years later, learned this in the course of conversation, he sent him a bag of dollars containing the full amount. I cannot vouch for the truth of either of these stories, but several people have told me that the events occurred as related.

There is no doubt that, towards the end of his career, Hayes's temper became utterly beyond his control, and that he shot several people in these fits of rage. He always professed himself sorry for these acts, but penitence does not appear to have weighed much on his spirits.

He was arrested once by the English consul in Samoa, who allowed him out on parole—perhaps because there

was no prison to keep him in. But he broke his parole, and escaped with a man called Pease, who was in much the same line of business as himself. They went to Savage Island, where a German trader was living; and there, by means of forged letters, they got all the produce at that place, and went to Fiji to sell it. But, in Fiji, Pease proved himself too cunning for our hero. He induced Hayes to go to the River Rewa, where he said he had a ship waiting for him. Hayes was to bring this ship back to Levuka, where the cargo which they were going to take on board in Fiji was to be divided; after this each was to go his own way and endeavour to sell his share. Hayes believed this story, went off to the Rewa, found no ship, and on his return found no Pease. However, he consoled himself by entering into partnership with one of the Fijians, with whom he went to Sydney, and thence to Batavia.

Here he is heard of again as stealing another ship; and a Dutch man-of-war pursued, but failed to catch him. He was captured shortly after this by an English man-of-war, but told so plausible a tale, and looked so unlike a man to commit any of the crimes imputed to him, that he was not only put back on board his own ship, but was supplied with cannons and other things which he required.

It was a favourite practice of his to disappear for many months at a time, and spread a report that he was dead, so that, as in the fable of the wolf, when he actually did die no one believed the report.

The last act of his life was perhaps the most audacious he ever committed. Fortune had not been kind to him for some time after his capture by the English ship. He had lost his vessel, and had by some means or another reached San Francisco. There he remained for some time without seeing an opening for his talents. One day he met an old cook of his, and, after a little conversation, they concocted a plan between them. This plan was to seize a cutter which was in the harbour, and escape at night. But this was not all. Ship-stealing was nothing new to Bully Hayes. It so happened that he was in love with the wife of the captain of the cutter. Whether this affection was returned or not I cannot say, but that seems to have been a matter not much considered, as Hayes declared that he would not steal the cutter without also stealing the wife. His plans were carefully laid; and one night, while the captain was on shore and his wife on board alone, he pulled off to his lady-love in the cutter, quietly hove up the anchor, and made sail.

The whole thing was done in the quietest manner possible, and, whatever the captain's wife may have thought of it at the time, they seem to have got on excellent terms later on. Hayes made for his old haunts, but fate ordained that he should never reach them.

One day, while the cook was steering, Hayes found fault with him, and got up to kick him. The cook, who was an old acquaintance, and considered himself privi-

leged to reply, did so in rather warm terms; whereupon Hayes flew into one of his furious rages, and went below to his cabin for a revolver. At that period of his career he was reckless, no doubt, and meant to shoot the cook. The cook, however, objected, and, catching up the first piece of wood he saw, got on to the top of the little deck-house over the ladder, and, the moment Hayes showed his head above deck, gave him a blow which killed him on the spot. This cook seems to have been somewhat doubtful as to whether Hayes was even now dead, so he fetched the largest anchor the cutter possessed, and bound the body to it, after which he hove anchor and body overboard, remarking, "For sure Massa Hayes dead this time."

So ended Bully Hayes. His course of successful roguery was a very long one, and most certainly he was by no means the hero that some have tried to represent him. He was as fond of cheating a poor man as he was of defrauding a Government on a large scale. He had educated himself well, and had a very plausible and pleasant manner. He looked honest, and with all these advantages he succeeded in deceiving people who would not have been taken in by more common rogues.

He used to say that he could never have made the reputation he had, and escaped justice so long, had he not been strictly temperate; in which expression of opinion he was doubtless perfectly right.

CHAPTER XII.

NEW GUINEA.

NEW GUINEA, the largest island in the world after Australia, presents a field to the geographer, the ethnologist, and the student of natural history, the like of which can exist in no other part of the earth.

Our knowledge of the country is so limited, that we do not even yet know the coast-line thoroughly. As for the interior, that has never yet been seen by any European.

To give my readers some idea of the extent of the country and of the misapprehensions that exist respecting it, I cannot do better than quote the Rev. William Turner, who says: "New Guinea has recently attracted a large amount of attention, and all that has been written upon the subject has been read by an eager public. Many different accounts have reached this country (England) regarding its people and its productions. These have only tended to confuse our ideas as to that far-off land.

"This confusion is due to a combination of circumstances. In the first place, it is hard to realize the extent of New Guinea, and we forget that it is very much larger than Great Britain, ranking with Borneo as the second island in the world in extent.* Writers on New Guinea have also failed to specify the exact locality from which their observations were taken. It is evident that, as there are different tribes in New Guinea, the manners and customs of those inhabiting one part may be, and in reality are, very different from, and in some cases even opposite to, those in another part. In our own country a description of the manners and customs of the Highlanders of Scotland would not be correct of the inhabitants of Kent, nor would it be right to use a description of either as applicable to the people of Great Britain generally. This, however, has often been done with regard to New Guinea. Some writers also have written, not according to knowledge, but according to fancy, and in their case distance has lent enchantment to the scene. Other reports are rendered inaccurate by the short acquaintance travellers have had with the people they describe."

Every word of this is true. Lately especially, we have been supplied *usque ad nauseam* with descriptions more or less fanciful of Port Moresby and the Motu tribe. The poor missionaries have been inundated

* Borneo used to be thought larger than New Guinea, but is in reality not quite so large.

with newspaper correspondents, till they firmly refused to supply any information at all.

Exploring expeditions, got up at five minutes' notice, have ferreted out secrets concerning the character of the natives, hitherto unknown even to themselves ; while tracts of country have been discovered which assuredly must be of enormous value hereafter—if they exist.

I will here give a short account of the visit to Astrolabe Bay and the adjacent coast, which I paid in the course of the cruise in 1881, already referred to. I hope it may be not without interest, as it is a part of the country visited before me only by Baron Maclay, and one other European, though by many people since. Also I may afterwards be permitted to make a few general remarks on the rest of the country. Though I do not profess to have anything but a slight knowledge of the inhabitants, I believe I have a better right to express my opinions than most people, as I have visited New Guinea three times—once on the north, once on the south, and once on the south-east coast,—and have seen something of the people in all those parts.

Before going to Astrolabe Bay, as it was absolutely impossible to procure the services of any interpreter, and as the nature of my business rendered it imperative that I should be able to converse a little more fully than by signs alone with the natives, Baron Maclay kindly supplied me with a short code, which proved to be of immense service to me.

A few extracts from the journal kept by me at that time, may describe the appearance of the coast and natives better than I could do now, as these things were then fresh in my memory.

"*H.M.S. 'Beagle,' June* 11, 1881.—Up to Thursday night we had almost dead calms, only making about twenty miles a day. We got a rain squall on Thursday night, however, in which we made another fifteen miles. When it cleared up we found land all around us. However, till next day, M—— could not determine his position. On Friday we found that the land was Lottin, Crown, Long, and Dampier islands. We could also see the New Britain coast, and straight ahead of us rose the coast of New Guinea, at that particular spot twelve thousand feet high. This morning we were close up to it, and it is certainly a most magnificent sight, to see this land rising straight out of the sea, to such an enormous height.

"In the afternoon, about two o'clock, we came to an anchor, in a tiny little cove with only just room to swing in, but very deep water. Maclay had called it Port Constantine, and it was his head-quarters while he was staying in Astrolabe Bay.

"We saw a few canoes coming off to us, but they seemed rather shy at first, till I shouted out the magical name of Maclay; then they came up, as fast as they could. They had all got very powerful bows and enormous arrows. By the help of the few words Maclay had written down for me, I was able to in-

form them that 'he would come back to them soon;' that I was his brother (in the native sense); and that I wanted to see their towns. They at once became extremely friendly, and kept on telling each other that I was Maclay's brother. I then asked for the principal men of the villages by name, and they promised that they should come off next day, and would then take me to their towns.

"In the evening, M—— and I went ashore to look for water. I took my gun, in the hope of shooting some birds; but though I heard plenty, the bush was so thick I could not see one. We walked about for some time, and found a little creek with good water, but we did not explore it very far, as it looked a most likely place for alligators.

"*Sunday, June* 12*th.*—In the morning a crowd of canoes came off to us to trade. The people seemed to have nothing but bows and arrows, and spears, of rather a rough description. A few of them asked for tobacco, but they evidently did not care much about it. Knives and beads were in great demand, but they had so few things of any interest themselves, that the trading was not carried on with any very great vigour.

"M—— and I had settled to visit Gurendu, which is the largest village here, after divisions, in the morning. As soon as divisions were over, a native told me that Sa-ul, the chief I had asked for, was then coming off in a canoe, so we determined to wait for him. When he came alongside we lowered the boarding netting for

him, and he came on board after some persuasion, as he was evidently in a great fright. We took him down to the cabin, where we showed him anything we thought likely to take his fancy. Oddly enough, he seemed much more pleased with the masks and spears, etc., which we had brought from other islands, than with anything else. The poor old man then attempted a feat, manifestly beyond him, though he had evidently tried it before, namely, smoking a clay pipe, filled with trade tobacco. After a few draws, he rushed up the steps of the cabin, and was violently sick. When he came back he roared with laughter for some time. The steward then gave him a piece of bread and jam, which he gravely licked with his vermilion tongue, and then handed to other members of his staff, who all did the same. No one, however, thought of eating the bread, till it came to a small boy, who made the attempt. He was not, however, allowed to swallow it, as the elder members of his family, when they saw it was good to eat, made him disgorge it, after which it was handed round from tongue to tongue in the most convivial manner till it was all finished.

"We then mada Sa-ul some small presents, which seemed to delight him hugely, and proposed that he should go to Gurendu. Before he left the room, however, he was destined to suffer a severe shock to his nerves. He was pulling everything about in a great state of astonishment, and finally came to a seltzogene, the handle of which he pressed. Of course, it at once

discharged a stream of soda-water into his face, and poor Sa-ul tumbled down as if he had been shot. After this, we got into the boat and started.

"We began our walk to the town at a point about a mile along the bay from where we were anchored. There was a capital path leading us through two walls of bush, into which one could not see a yard, and which came together about twenty feet over our heads. Along the side of it were any number of ferns and crotons, and there were innumerable festoons of orchids hanging down all round us. It was a luxuriance of vegetation I had never seen before, and had not imagined possible. I had been in great hopes of shooting some birds, but such a thing was quite impossible. The orchids, I had not seen before, anywhere, and there were several sorts of crotons quite new to me. Unfortunately, there is no room on board to carry cuttings.

"After walking a considerable distance we heard shrieks, and the sound of people running, and then we came to a clearing in the bush, with a few wretched bamboo huts in the middle of it. This village, the name of which I did not catch, was entirely deserted, evidently on account of our arrival. We could hear the people talking, no doubt discussing us, quite close in the bush, but we could not see one. As there were no points of interest in the external appearance of this village, and as, in the absence of the owners, we could not enter any houses, we started off again, and after walking some time we came to another larger clearing,

and a larger number of huts; this, Sa-ul informed me, with a proud air of proprietorship, was Gurendu. We heard the same shrieks here, and retreating footsteps, but this town was not absolutely deserted.

"An aged lady, totally devoid of clothing, no doubt owing to her extreme anxiety to get away, as it is not the habit of the women to go naked, was discovered, sitting on the ground in the middle of the town. Sa-ul then began to reassure the people in the bush, and to tell them that we were going to do them no harm, and one by one they began to come in. Only one woman, however, made her appearance; perhaps owing to the fact that she possessed a garment of grass, which came down to her knees. After the people had come in, there was a great deal of patting and pinching to be endured; it could have been dispensed with, as they had all got skin diseases.

"I went into Sa-ul's house, but he seemed to have hardly any property in it. There were some very rough earthenware cooking-pots, and a few spears and bows, but nothing else. Sa-ul was perfectly civil to us all the time we were on shore, but it is rather remarkable that, though I gave him a good many things, he never offered me anything in return. In the Admiralties, where the people look infinitely more savage than they do here, the chief insisted on making me a present, in return for mine to him. After walking for some time round Gurendu we turned back to the boat with a crowd at our heels, and got in before dark. . . .

"I could see no signs of European implements, beads, or cloth. . . .

"Maclay says that every yard of land, and every tree on it, is owned by some one, and that the natives would never dream of selling it.

"There are supposed to be plenty of scented woods, and the natives do smell strong of something.

"Tobacco I should say there certainly was not, as we not only saw no signs of it in the towns, where it would most probably be planted, but the natives did not seem to care at all about ours, though some of them did know the use of it. . . .

"As far as the appearance of the people goes, I imagine Wallace must be wrong when he says that the Astrolabe Bay natives are not true Papuans, but a colony from another place. They are utterly unlike the New Britain, New Ireland, or Admiralty Islanders, and I do not know where else they could have come from. They are copper coloured instead of black, and have Jewish features. There is none of the flat-nosed thick-lipped type about them; and their heads are better shaped than those of any of the natives round about them. If they did not all suffer from skin diseases they would be a very fine-looking lot of people, and I cannot understand Wallace's first impression of disgust. They are, owing no doubt to their want of white 'civilization,' extremely friendly and honest. . . . It is possible that they were more civil to me than they would be to every one, owing to the fact of my

acquaintance with Maclay, which I made the most of. They seem to fight very little among themselves. None of them were scarred, like the Solomon Islanders, and the bows they sold us had evidently been out of use for a long time, and had all new cane strings. There seemed to be very few weapons of any sort in the houses I went into.

"I should very much like to stay some time here and find out more about them, but, in the absence of any interpreter, the thing is difficult.

"The birds and beasts must be very interesting, if it were only possible to get at them. I noticed many natives wearing bird of paradise plumes, but I could not get any shot for me. . . . There must be very fine land up the rivers. Indeed, up the Gabina River, I could see plains stretching for some twenty miles or more. . . .

"This coast is, I think, the most beautiful I have ever seen. The mountains, just behind where we are now at anchor, rise to a height of over fourteen thousand feet. As they are not more than fifteen miles off, they seem to rise abruptly out of the sea. There are many peaks, the highest of which is just behind where we are now anchored. . . . There seem to be perpetual thunderstorms going on, and at night the peaks are lighted up for a second, and vanish again. We were lucky enough to see them without any clouds, the day we came in,—a thing which I imagine hardly ever happens."

These notes, jotted down at the time I was there, may be considered hardly worthy of reproduction, but, such as they are, I believe they are the first which have been published with reference to that part of the coast. Mr. Maclay has, I know, an immense amount of information about the people and country in the neighbourhood of Astrolabe Bay; but he has not published it in English, though he has, I think, in Russian.

Astrolabe Bay has always been looked upon, for some reason unknown to me, as a suitable place for a party of adventurers to swoop down upon, and take possession of. It has one fatal disqualification for any scheme of the sort, which is that it possesses no harbour. Even in the south-east trades season an anchorage would be most difficult to pick up, for any but very small ships; while in the north-west season the thing would be out of the question.

Judging by the luxuriant vegetation, it is fair to assume that the soil is rich. It must also be the case that the mountain range affords climates varying between the ultra-tropical and temperate, but neither of these advantages would be of any commercial value in the absence of harbour accommodation.

The north coast of New Guinea seems to be singularly deficient in harbours, whereas on the south coast there are many good ones, both large and small; and of boat harbours there are no end. There is no barrier reef on the north coast—a sad misfortune, so far as shipping is concerned; but there are patches of coral

which, while they make navigation dangerous, afford no protection to the coast.

The country near Astrolabe Bay has an abundant supply of water, but the rivers are of necessity small, as their sources are to be found not more than from fifteen to twenty miles from the coast.

Many of these rivers have wide plains, extending for many miles on either bank, covered with the tall sweet-tasting grass which is invariably the sign of rich soil. But the mountain range has two sides, and where does all the water run to which collects on the southern side? That is a question for future explorers to decide.

However rich this country may be it seems to have benefited its owners but little. They are a poor lot: not mean-looking in appearance, though there are many finer specimens of Papuans to be seen; but they seem to be satisfied to live on what will barely support life.

They were singularly undemonstrative in the manner in which they bade us welcome. No actual fault could be found with them, but there was none of the excitement usually to be seen. This might perhaps have been due to the fact that, being ignorant of all white men but Maclay, they did not look forward to becoming the possessors of the English knives and tomahawks so much prized elsewhere. I am bound to say that they did not get many of these articles from us, though I made a few presents. In the Admiralties, where the people are equally unsophisticated, the excitement of

trading was immense, at times almost leading to a fight.

I saw no trimly kept plantations, no women engaged in making puddings, etc., as one generally does in most other places in the Western Pacific. The people did not seem to have any implements for hunting, at all events such implements as there were seemed almost rotten from age. Their houses were of the meanest possible description, and they were evidently quite unaccustomed to war.

Perhaps this last circumstance accounts for their sleepy appearance. They seemed to me to want waking up; but doubtless they feel satisfied. If they have no wants, and no disputed property, and not even a quarrel with their neighbours (perhaps they have no neighbours to quarrel with), I do not see how they could be otherwise than satisfied. Nature provides everything for them, without any exertion on their part; no doubt they consider "a sufficiency always enough."

I can give no reason for this indolence and apathy on the part of the Astrolabe people, except that their lines are laid in pleasant places, and they enjoy the native paradise of plenty to eat, nothing to do, and no one to fight. Long may they continue to enjoy it.

For ten days we stayed on this coast, not so much from inclination as from necessity, for we could make no way at all against the fresh south-easters and strong currents of Dampier Straits. But the better

acquainted we became with the appearance of the coast, the more impressed we daily became with its magnificent scenery, which I am not likely to forget quickly. In spite of the apathy and sleepiness of the natives, I was sorry to leave this land of the lotus-eaters, and would have given much to have been able to stay longer and learn more about it.

I will now pass on to the south-eastern peninsula of New Guinea, which has been recently taken under the protection of Great Britain, and is naturally on that account the portion concerning which the public will be most desirous of hearing something. This peninsula is completely encircled, north and south, by high mountain ranges. These mountains are shown in the charts on the south coast, but the range on the north is not marked. Both in the southern and northern ranges the highest altitude is about thirteen thousand feet. No one knows what sort of country there is between these two great ranges.

The ascent of any part of the northern range has never yet been attempted, nor does its appearance invite such an attempt. It runs parallel to the coast at so short a distance from it that its sides are of necessity extremely precipitous.

On the south the only party that ever nearly crossed the Owen Stanley Range was a gold prospecting expedition in 1878. They were accompanied by Mr. Andrew Goldie, who tells me that at their furthest point Mount Owen Stanley bore about north-north-

west. But in all probability, judging from other accounts of some of the diggers themselves, they never got a bearing of that mountain west of north. In this case they could never have actually crossed the range. Of the country they traversed they have not very much of interest to relate.

The Goldie River, a tributary of the Lalogi, was discovered, and was followed up as far as the lower spurs of the range. No gold was found beyond what is termed "the colour"—that is to say, gold in very small and unpayable quantities.

The progress of the expedition was very slow and painful. Tracks had to be cut through the dense undergrowth, and often they did not travel two miles in the day. An immense amount of determination and pluck seems to have been shown, but failure was the only reward. Many died of fever; and the survivors who returned to the coast were taken to Australia in a destitute condition. The farthest point attained from the coast was under fifty miles as the crow flies.

Though the object for which the expedition was undertaken proved a failure, some results of it still remain. Mr. Goldie added considerably to the list of known birds, and the track which was cut with so much labour is still in a condition to be of considerable help to future travellers for fifty miles of their journey.

Of subsequent exploring expeditions it is not necessary to say much. They also have added a little to our knowledge of the natural history of the country.

But though we know nothing of the interior, we may form conjectures, which will probably be found to be not very wide of the mark.

It is hardly probable that any very high land exists there, for several reasons. Mr. Chalmers has reached the upper spurs of the ranges, and was on one occasion within twelve miles of the summit of Mount Owen Stanley. From the elevation he attained, high mountains in the interior could have been seen, though he was unable at any time to reach a point from whence a bird's-eye view of the country could be obtained. It is probable that the country is of an undulating nature, rising gradually to the range on either side. Another reason for supposing this to be the case is that either large rivers or lakes must almost certainly exist. The annual rainfall is heavy, and in the upper spurs of the northern range apparently incessant.

We know, at all events, the mouths of the rivers, and the Fly has been ascended by D'Albertis for a considerable distance—it is said for five hundred miles. But that enormous river, according to D'Albertis, does not drain the south-eastern half of the island.

I think it very probable that the Fly receives the waters of another river larger than itself, which drains the south-east peninsula. The rivers with which we are acquainted in the south-east can have no share in carrying off any of the water from the interior.

I do not remember whether D'Albertis mentions the fact in his book, but the theory I have put forward is

supported by the account given by one of his party, with whom I have had conversations. According to my informant, about two hundred miles from the mouth of the Fly, a large river flows into it from the eastward. Most members of the expedition thought that they ought to have followed this river, but D'Albertis decided in favour of the other stream. It seems strange that, though he was twice or three times on the Fly River, he should not have thought it advisable to follow this branch. However, it will now be left to some other explorer, with the possibility of obtaining far greater results than D'Albertis has done.

In the event of the work being taken in hand shortly by some experienced person, it cannot be regretted that the celebrated Italian traveller should not have disturbed this river, for his relations with the natives, from whatever cause they may have arisen, always appear to have been most unfortunate.

Should my theory be correct, and it is one which will very shortly be proved or disproved by a better exploration of the rivers, all idea of penetrating into the country by crossing the range should be abandoned. More exploration could be done by following the course of such a river and its tributaries in six months than could be effected in six years on foot, with all the difficulties of cutting tracks, and carrying trade goods and supplies.

In New Guinea, modern explorers, if they can be

dignified by such a title, have gone at their work in a headlong fashion, putting their faith in rifles and tomahawks, and hoping by these two powerful agents to overcome ignorance of languages, native prejudices, and want of food and means of carrying it, not to speak of the difficulties of mountain ranges and natural obstructions.

Such a course could only end in failure. No one can *force* his way through the country, and only a madman would attempt it.

A traveller in New Guinea must be blessed with extreme patience to be successful. Numerous hitches must and will occur, and it is far better for him to stay at a place till any little misunderstanding which may arise be satisfactorily settled, than to push on, and find on his return that it has developed into a serious grievance. Even if double or treble interpretation be necessary, still interpreters must be taken. Natives who have never met white men will assume that they are enemies, unless they are undeceived. Then presents innumerable must be given, and very frequently some common man gets them by mistake, instead of the chief, and then the chief gets very angry, and must be appeased. This is where most white men come to grief. They do not see the use of making presents and getting nothing in return, quite losing sight of the fact that it is permission to travel quietly through the country which is bought. Another fatal mistake, I think, is the habit of making demonstrations, to im-

press the native mind with a sense of the white man's power; letting off fireworks, exploding dynamite, and many other things of this description have been done, and only serve to frighten the people, and make them distrustful, or even hostile.

The interior, so far as we can judge, seems to be very thinly inhabited, and possibly in many places only by nomadic tribes. This places another great difficulty in the way of travelling by land.

Where no carriers can be obtained, the transport of food becomes almost an impossibility. Even in the thickly populated districts it is difficult enough, as the natives of one tribe often refuse to pass their boundary line, when doing so would bring them into a hostile country. The stores are then deposited on the ground, and you may be left with neither guide nor interpreter, to take you to the next village to get other carriers.

In all probability before these lines are read we shall know more of the country than we now do, as properly led expeditions will by that time have explored the country to some extent.

As has always been the case with new and unknown countries, extravagant reports have been industriously circulated as to the vegetable and mineral wealth of the interior, and the rapid fortunes which could be made in it. An enormous country like New Guinea must present every variety of soil and climate; and while in some places, such as Astrolabe Bay, the richest tropical vegetation may be seen; in others, such as Port

Moresby, nothing but pandanus, eucalyptus, and coarse grass will grow. In the latter place even the cocoa-nut is a failure.

It is fair to assume that so mountainous a country as New Guinea is rich in minerals, but as yet we have no proof that it is so in any part of it.

Then as to birds, it is probably as well supplied with them as most other tropical countries, but South America is far in advance of it. Dr. Finsch has assured me that, with the exception of the twenty known birds of paradise, New Guinea is not a particularly interesting country in this respect.

Very few of its animals are known. Two or three new sorts have been described, and there was a report, some time ago, of an animal like a tiger, which lived in the mountains, and occasionally made raids on native villages. The story seemed to have some truth in it, for the natives recognized the picture of the tiger; but as yet it lacks confirmation.

Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers, whose names of late have been much before the public, are the only people who really have much knowledge of the country; but in spite of their ten years' residence in it, their acquaintance is limited to the south coast. Even on the south coast it is necessary to know three or four dialects, in order to get on with the natives.

The system of trading pursued by the natives renders it a comparatively easy matter to obtain interpreters for various parts of the coast. The whole of the south coast

is visited by trading expeditions from various places, and sago is exchanged for pottery, ornaments, etc.

The traders make frequent voyages for two or three hundred miles, and thus are constantly placed in communication with their near and distant neighbours. It is an interesting sight to see a fleet of trading canoes under sail. They are huge unwieldy things, and their mat sails are far too small to be of any great service to them. The *lakatoi*, as this sort of vessel is called, is constructed by lashing from five to eight of the ordinary canoes together. A solid platform or deck is built, and on this are constructed deck-houses, and fairly strong gunwales. Considerable attention is paid to comfort, as the voyage probably occupies several months. Such bad sailers are these lakatois that they can hardly hold a beam wind, and, therefore, unless the wind is quite fair, they have to depend on pulling through shallow water. It sometimes happens that they get blown out to sea, and are carried past their intended destination. Should they become scattered, and make parts of the coast where the natives are unfriendly, those on board are pretty certain to be killed. It usually happens that when the crews of the trading fleet have finished their trading, and have nothing further to detain them, they seize a number of pigs and girls and try to make off with them. This of course leads to a fight, in which the crews are generally successful. If the girls are sensible they run into the bush on the eve of the strangers' departure, but there are many who like the fun of being fought for, and

stay on purpose to be kidnapped. It gives some of them immense satisfaction to accept their lover's payment for their marriage and then to fly with the strangers.

The New Guinea native, like many another savage, is not given to cultivating the finer feelings of humanity.

Very recently eleven lakatois of the Elema tribe started on a trading expedition. The intention was to follow the coast for one hundred and fifty miles, for which distance all the natives were friendly. So bad a season for starting on a long voyage was chosen, that they were caught in a gale of wind, and four of them were blown into the district of the Aroma tribe, while two went to pieces and sank with all hands. The rest of the fleet managed to get to Port Moresby, which was their original destination. The crews which had fallen into the hands of the Aroma natives were rescued with immense difficulty by some Motu canoes which happened to be there, and were by this means safely escorted to Port Moresby, where they rejoined their friends. Their friends, however, were so angry at the loss of the canoes with their valuable cargoes of sago, that nothing would satisfy them but to attempt to attack the very Motu natives who had saved their companions. Their reason was, as they said, "We are in trouble; why should these Motuans be happy?" Gratitude was never thought of for one moment. As is the case with many other tribes, gratitude is a feeling so little understood that in all the known

New Guinea languages there is not even a word for "thank you."

Friendship between a white man and a native usually means, on the part of the latter, "What can I get out of him?"

The old saying, "Timeo Danaos," etc., is particularly applicable to such intimacies, as the native will constantly bring you small worthless presents, a few betel-nuts, or a yam or two; but if you accept them, and it is very hard to refuse to do so, in a week's time he will return and demand an American axe, or whatever else he may consider a fair equivalent.

The character of the natives may be best described by a series of negatives. They are not grateful, they are not truth-telling, they are not honest, they are not many other things which we consider advisable in a high state of civilization; but then they are not ashamed of these defects, and they always laugh immoderately when they are found out. There are many far worse people to get on with, and I am bound to say that most of the white men with whom they are acquainted set them no very exalted example in these respects.

It may not be out of place to conclude these intentionally short remarks on New Guinea with a few words about the mission establishment there.

This mission has been established for about ten years. On the arrival of Mr. Lawes he found himself in the midst of a savage population, ignorant of his

language, intentions, and reason for being there. Till he acquired an influence over those around him, his life was constantly in danger. The people amongst whom he settled are now the quietest and most civilized on the coast, but then they were the strongest and most exacting. With their robber, fighting, and pirate chiefs, they used to levy black-mail on all the tribes near them.

Mr. Lawes shortly after his arrival was joined by Mr. Chalmers, and by their united efforts they began a system of planting native teachers at various spots along the coast, till they succeeded in establishing a line of communication from the Papuan Gulf to the Louisiade Archipelago. Many of these teachers were Rarotongans, who had been trained by Mr. Chalmers while he was attached to the mission at that place. Of course there have been some casualties among them; some have died of fever, and some have been murdered by the natives; but their general success in establishing a firm footing, and gaining an ascendency over the natives wherever they have been, shows clearly that they are intelligent and courageous men. They certainly have a great aptitude for picking up dialects. Though it has been much the habit to laugh at and despise the native teachers, yet it is to them that the white man in difficulties always turns for protection, and it is always accorded him. They are furnished with serviceable whale-boats, and therefore anything of importance which may occur

on the coast is known within a few days at the head station.

The English missionaries have been always ready to supply visitors with information and assistance, and it is very largely owing to the influence they have over the natives that so many white men have visited the country without accident. Many of these in their subsequent writings have omitted to mention this fact, or to quote the source from which the greater part of their information has been derived. Of all the missions in the Pacific there is not one which has done better work than that which is now firmly established in New Guinea; and to Messrs. Lawes, Chalmers, and M'Farlane will be largely due the credit of the success of any future measures which may be taken there.

THE END.

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